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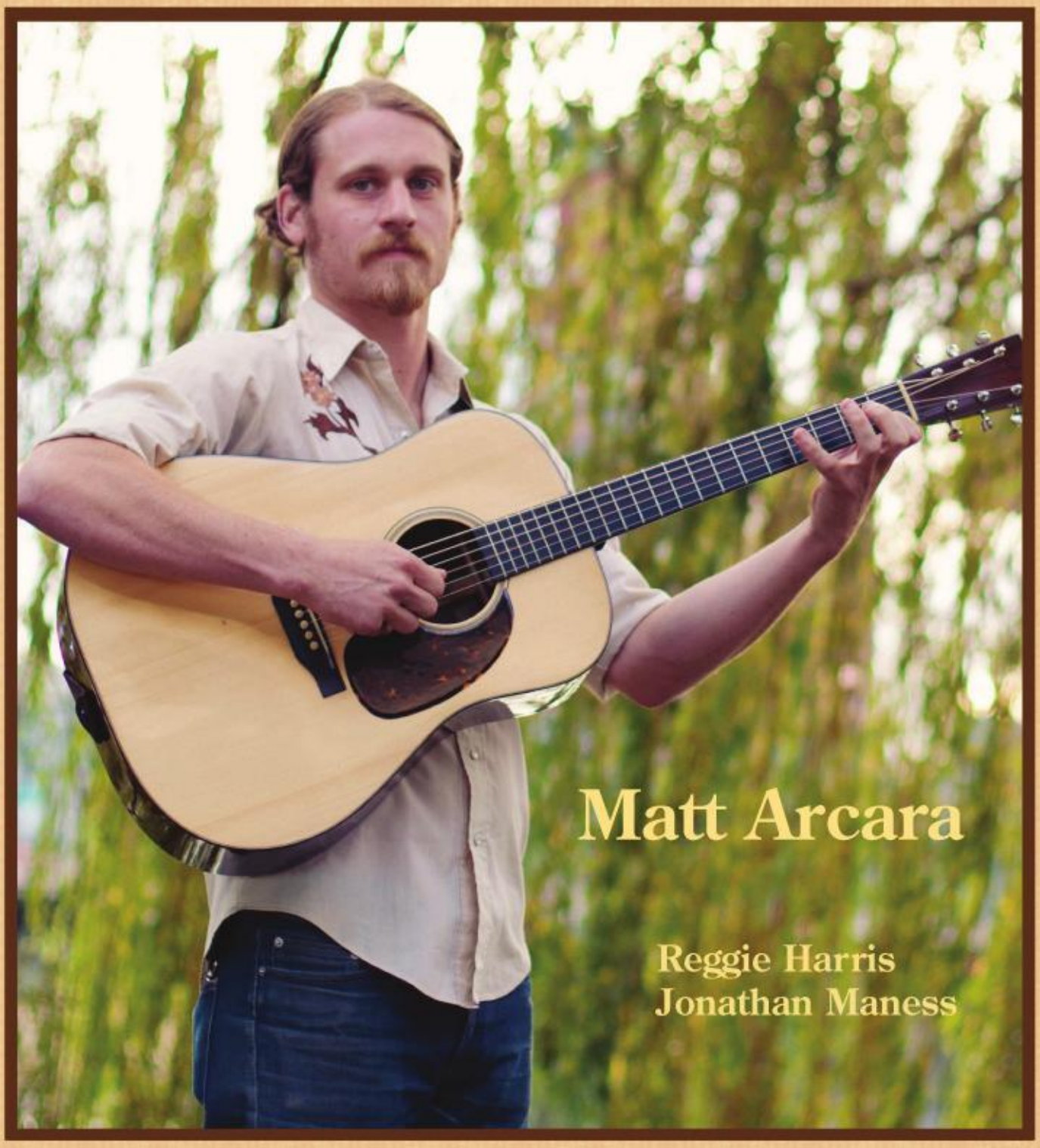
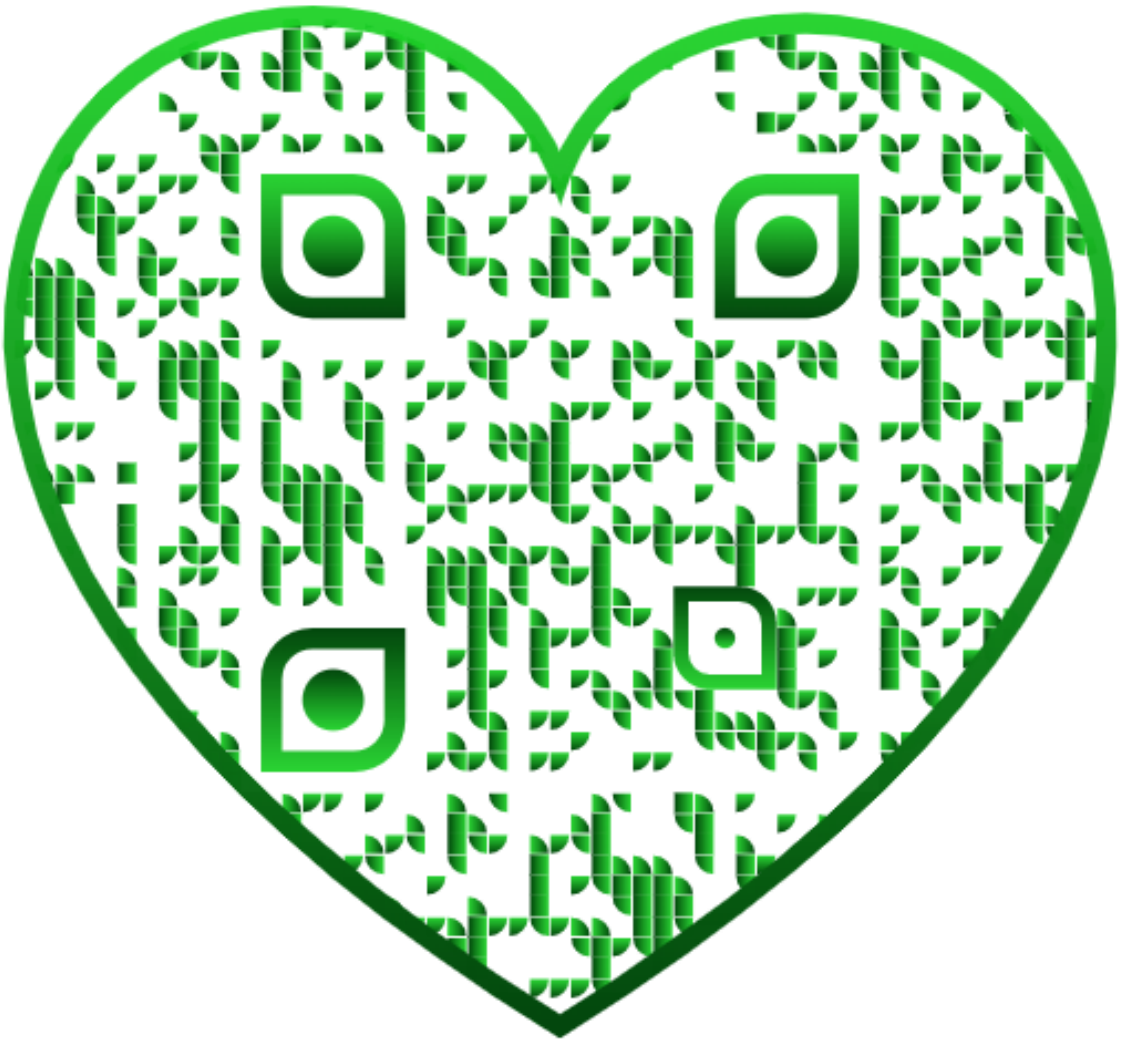
Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Volume 15, Number 5 July/August 2011



Matt Arcara

Reggie Harris
Jonathan Maness



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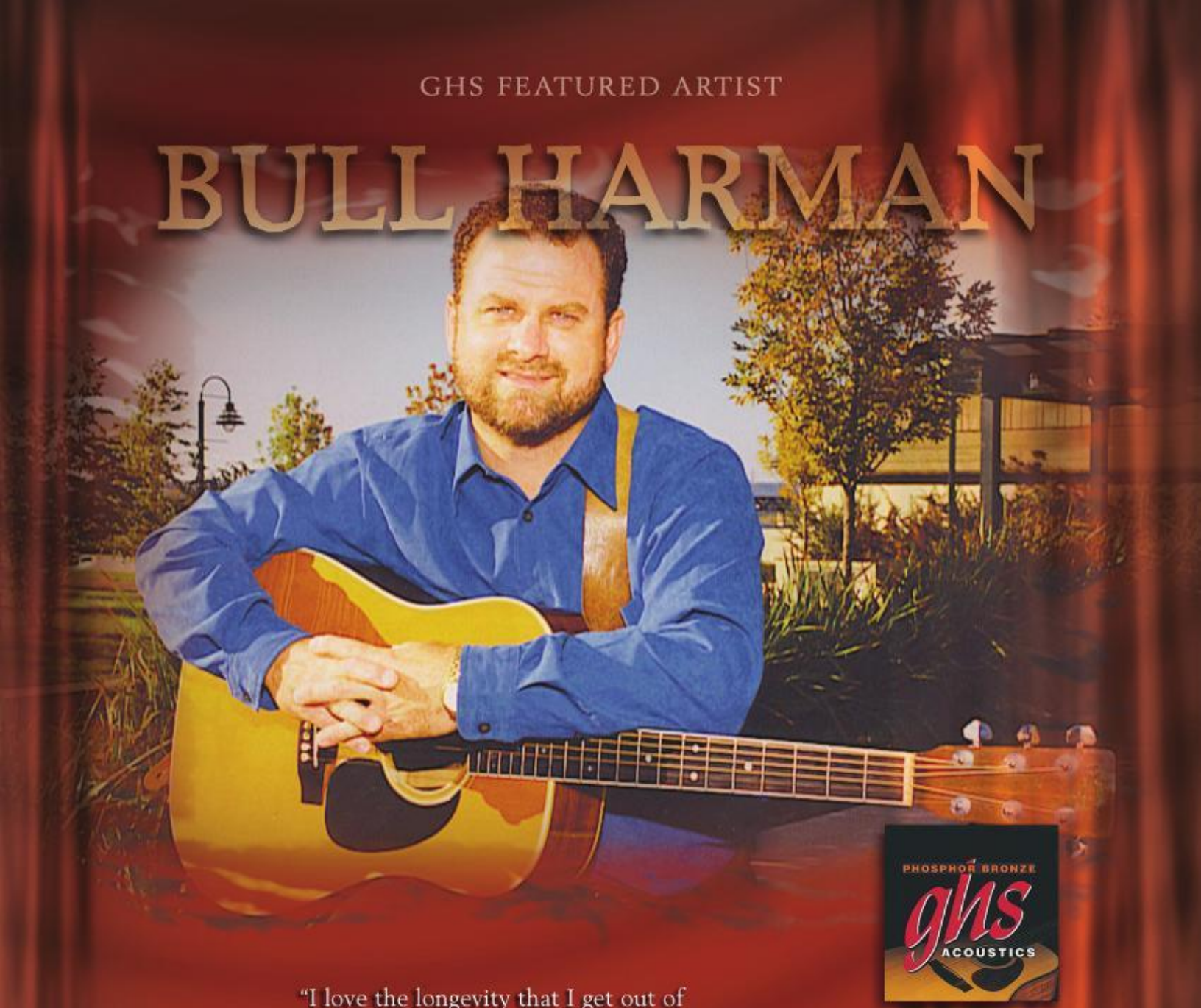

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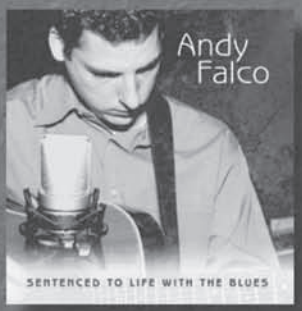

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The second section of this book is focused on advanced flatpicking technique. We approached this topic by first having Tim May record "advanced level" improvisations for nineteen different flatpicking tunes. Tim selected the tunes and went into the studio with a list of techniques, like the use of triplets, natural and false harmonics, note bending, quoting, alternate tuning, syncopation, twin guitar, minor key tunes, hybrid picking, advanced crosspicking, string skipping, etc. There are a ton of absolutely awesome flatpicking arrangements by Tim May in this book, with explanations of each technique.

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Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 7 is a 170 page book, with 67 audio tracks, that will show you how to add texture, variety, and movement to your rhythm accompaniment in the context of playing bluegrass, fiddle tune music, folk music, acoustic rock, Western swing, big band swing, and jazz. The best part of this book is that it doesn't just present you with arrangements to memorize. It teaches you how you can create and execute your own accompaniment arrangements in a variety of musical styles. Don't rely on the arrangements of others, learn a straight-forward and gradual approach to designing your own rhythm accompaniment.

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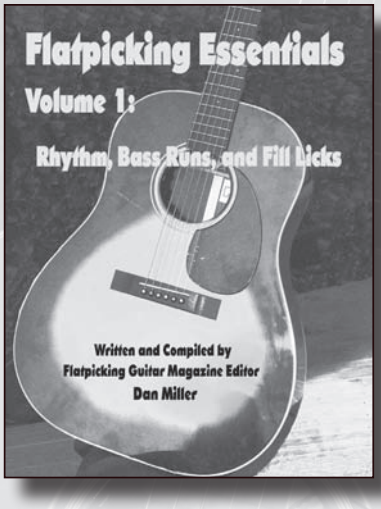

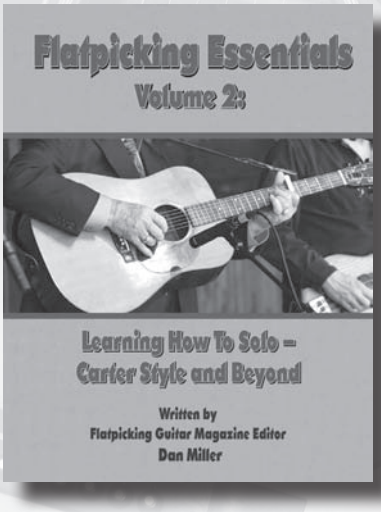

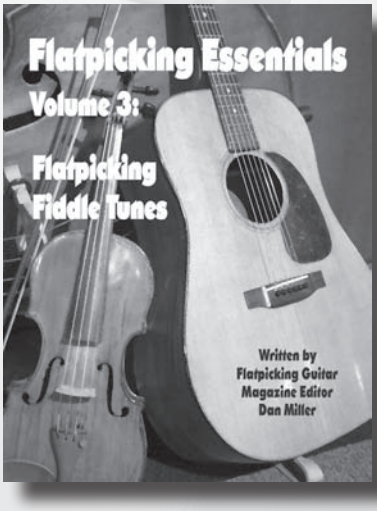

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Keeping Busy On the Road

This has been an incredibly busy year on the road for *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. I started out the year, during the first weekend of January, at the River City Music Festival in Portland, Oregon, and since that time I've only had two weekends off from road travel. I've either been out at a festival or been teaching guitar workshops with Tim May, or with Tim May and Brad Davis, every weekend.

I've really enjoyed meeting all of our subscribers on the road and I greatly appreciate you folks coming up to say "hello" at the *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* festival booth and coming out to attend our workshops. Things are going to continue to be busy in the coming months. In July we will be attending the Red, White & Bluegrass Festival in Morganton, North Carolina; The Grey Fox Festival in New York, and the Ossipee Valley Music Festival in Maine. After a couple of other yet-to-be-determined festivals on the east coast in August and early September, we will be heading out to the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. This is their 40th anniversary year and so it should be a great one.

After Winfield, Tim May and I will be heading up to Idaho, Oregon, and Washington to conduct a series of workshops in the northwest, then we head down through California and across the southern states from Arizona all the way over to Georgia. So, keep tuned-in to our email newsletter and we'll let you know when and where we will be. We'd love to see you at a festival or workshop!

Doves, Crows & Buzzards CD

In January 2011, Brad Davis, Tim May and I went into Brad Davis' studio in Commerce, Texas, and cut a CD. Brad, Tim, and I have been performing together for about seven years, but we've never taken the time to go into the studio and record until this past January. This CD is now available and we had a lot of fun performing at a CD release concert in Silver Spring, Maryland, back in May. Tim and Brad both do a lot of mighty fine guitar picking on this CD. If you are interested in checking it out, please visit the flatpickingmercantile.com website.

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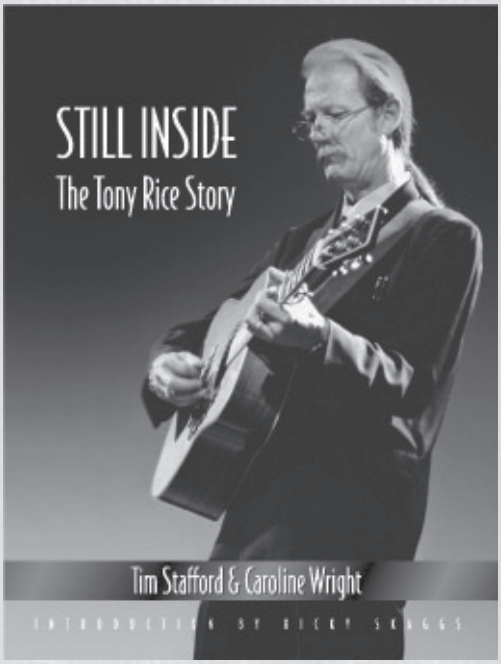
Now Available! Two New Biographical Books covering flatpicking guitar's two most influential performers: Tony Rice and Doc Watson!

Still Inside:
The Tony Rice Story
by Tim Stafford & Caroline Wright



A decade in the making, Still Inside: The Tony Rice Story delivers Tony's tale in his own inimitable words, and in anecdotes and observations from his friends, family, fans, and fellow musicians.

Tony's long road has taken him from coast to coast and around the world, through historic recordings and appearances that often profoundly move those who experience them. More than 100 people were interviewed for this book, sharing memories of Tony and discussing his indelible impact on their own music. Alison Krauss, J.D. Crowe, Sam Bush, Béla Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Ricky Skaggs, David Grisman, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Peter Rowan, and many others contribute intimate stories and frank observations of this private, enigmatic man.

In the book's final chapter, co-author Tim Stafford—a highly respected acoustic guitarist in his own right—provides insight into Tony's technique, timing, right hand, choice of picks, and much more. Tim also discusses Tony's prize possession, the 1935 Martin D-28 Herringbone guitar formerly owned by the great Clarence White.

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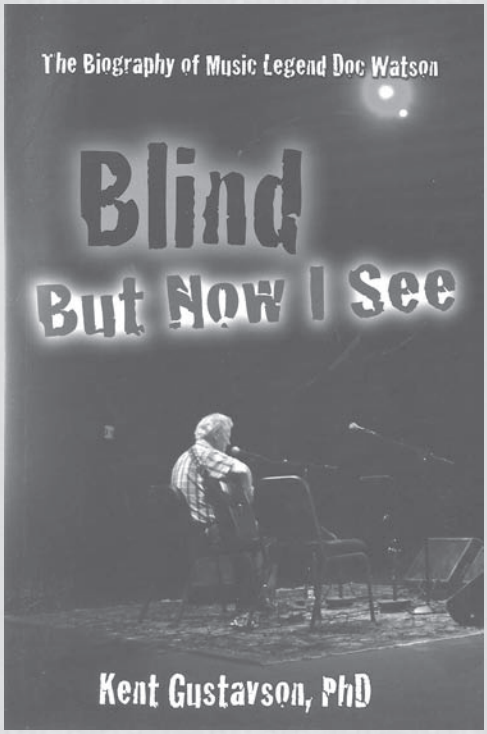

Blind But Now I See:
The Biography of Music Legend Doc Watson
by Kent Gustavson

From the day he stepped off the bus in New York City, North Carolina music legend Doc Watson changed the music world forever. His influence has been recognized by presidents and by the heroes of modern music, from country stars to rock and roll idols. This is a biography of a flatpicking legend.

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- David Grisman of Garcia/Grisman and Old and in the Way
- Sam Bush, The Father of Newgrass
- Guy Clark, Texas Songwriting Legend
- Michelle Shocked, Greg Brown, Mike Marshall, Tom Paxton, Maria Muldaur
- And many more!

Both Books are Available at www.flatpickingmercantile.com

Matt Arcara

by Dan Miller

Matt Arcara was one of those young flatpickers who I met years ago and said to myself, "If this guy sticks with it, he is going to do very well." I first met Matt nearly ten years ago. Since that time he has, in fact, kept with it and he has done very well in the music world. In addition to winning the National Flatpicking Contest in 2006, Matt founded, and continues to tour with, Joy Kills Sorrow, one of the hottest acoustic groups on the festival circuit. Additionally, he is making quite a name for himself as a guitar builder these days. I had the opportunity to visit with Matt at Wintergrass in Bellevue, Washington, in February of 2011 and conduct a podcast interview. It was at that time that I realized just how much Matt had accomplished since the last time we featured him in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. Then and there I decided to put Matt on the cover so that I could let the readers know about Matt's many accomplishments.

Before we talk about what Matt has been doing recently, I'll recap the early part of Matt's career for those who missed our last feature article (*Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*, Volume 7, Number 2, January/February 2003). The first time we featured Matt in *Flatpicking Guitar* he was 22 years old and had just released a solo CD titled *Matthew Arcara*. We reported that he was from Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and had started learning how to play classic rock at thirteen, and then at the age of seventeen he discovered fiddle tunes and began taking lessons with Mark Cosgrove. After graduating from high school he spent a year at Rutgers and then moved out to Eugene, Oregon, to attend the University of Oregon and study political science. While there he also began performing with the Severn Sisters and he recorded his solo CD. At that time, when I asked Matt about his future plans, he said that he wanted to pursue a career in music. He has done exactly what he said he was going to do.

Matt graduated from college in 2004 with a degree in Political Science. After graduation he moved to Portland, Oregon, continued to play around the northwest as a hired gun, and also started performing with Tristan and Tashina Clarridge. It was during that summer that the band Joy Kills Sorrow began to form. Matt explains, "I went out to Rockygrass and met up with my friend Joe Walsh (mandolin) and his friend Karl Doty (bass). We hung out and played music all weekend and found out that we were all interested in the same things. Joe was getting ready to move up to Boston to attend the Berklee College of Music and Karl was a student at the New England Conservatory (NEC). I had already been thinking about moving back to the east coast. Meeting up with Joe and Karl in Colorado helped me make that decision."

Matt made the move back east, landing in New York, in December 2004, however, before he finally made the move, he stayed on the road after Rockygrass in order to complete a long road trip. After attending Rockygrass he met up with Tristan and Tashina Clarridge at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. That year Matt placed second in the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship and Tristan placed first in the fiddle contest (Tashina had won the fiddle contest the year before). From there they traveled south to Atlanta, attended the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention in Athens, Alabama, (which Matt won on the guitar) and then headed to Nashville to attend the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) convention and Fanfest.

After the big whirlwind cross-country music tour with the Clarriges, Matt went back to Portland, packed up his belongings and move to Brooklyn, New York, where he got a job managing the wood shop for a clothing company. The shop built all of the store's displays and fixtures. Regarding his decision to move to New York instead of Boston, Matt said, "Everyone in Boston had school commitments and in New York I was closer to my family, plus I just enjoy Brooklyn better as a city."

Even though he was not living with Joe and Karl in Boston, he continued to play music with them and the trio added singer Heather Masse to the line up. Heather was a friend of Karl's who had just graduated from NEC. Matt recalls, "Things moved slowly at first. We were not really playing out at all, just getting together to work on material. We spent quite a while working out what material we wanted to play and how we wanted to play it. We would get together a few times a month. Eventually we did start playing a few gigs here and there, but we were not actively pursuing them. We went out and played some things that fell into our lap. We weren't looking real hard at first."

In the beginning the band didn't have a name. When asked how they came up with the name "Joy Kills Sorrow," Matt explained, "Bela Fleck had a tune called 'When Joy Kills Sorrow' on *The Bluegrass Sessions: Tales From The Acoustic Planet*. In the liner notes he mentions a radio station in Gary, Indiana, called WJKS that Bill and Charlie Monroe had played on back in the 1930s." According to Neil Rosenberg and Charles Wolfe's book *The Music of Bill Monroe*, Monroe had joked about the call letters WJKS meaning "Where Joy Kills Sorrow." Both Fleck's song title and Matt's band name are founded in the Monroe story. The band was actually in the studio recording a demo and needed to pick a name. Matt said, "Joy Kills Sorrow was the best of what we had come up with, so we just went with it."

During the first few years the band went through some "growing pains." Matt said, "We lost our bass player because he wanted to pursue more classical work. Bridget Kearney was brought in to play bass and the band added a banjo player, Adam Larrabee." Adam is a multi-instrumentalist who, at the time, was teaching jazz guitar at NEC. After the personnel changes, the band needed to "re-evaluate." Matt said, "Karl was from a classical background and did a lot of bowing on the bass. Bridget came to us from a jazz and rock background. So, we spent some time re-vamping our material, writing new material, and gigging a bit." In 2005 Matt moved to Boston in order to have more time to focus on the band.

After arriving in Boston, Matt got a job doing freelance carpentry so that he could have enough flexibility to work with the band. He said, "The acoustic and bluegrass music scene in Boston is amazing." In addition to wanting to spend more time working with the band and spend time exploring the music scene in Boston, Matt also wanted to focus some time wood-shedding with his contest tunes. After placing second at the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship in 2004, he had returned in 2005 and made the top five, but did not place in the top three. He was determined to "hunker down" so that he could do better in 2006. "Being in Boston, with peers that were really focused on improvement and pushing one's self musically, that sort of environment is really conducive to working on contest tunes. I would come home from an eight hour day swinging a hammer and work on contest tunes for about 2 hours everyday, and I started working on them really early in the season too." His practice plan worked because in September of 2006 Matt went back to Winfield and won the contest.

From 2005 through 2007 Joy Kills Sorrow continued to try to find firm footing from which to launch. Heather left the band to join the Wailin Jennys and although the band did release their first CD in 2007, they also lost Adam in that year. Matt said, "It was slow going for a while due to all of the personnel changes. After Adam left we added Wes Corbett on banjo and Emma Beaton on vocals. When they joined the band we all decided to spend more time and energy on the band. We were re-motivated."

Joe Walsh stayed with the band until he was offered a job with the Gibson Brothers in 2008. Matt said, "That is a great gig for Joe and so it made sense for him to take that job." The band replaced Joe with Jacob Jolliff on mandolin. Matt said, "Jacob is someone that I've known since he was a 12-year-old mandolin prodigy back

Matt Arcara and Bridget Kearney of Joy Kills Sorrow

Joy Kills Sorrow (right to left): Matt Arcara, Wes Corbett, Emma Beaton, Bridget Kearney, and Jacob Jolliff

in Oregon when I was in college". He is now the first "full ride" mandolin student to graduate from The Berklee College of Music. After Jacob joined the band we had a stable line up and everyone really focused on being consistent. Things started to take off from there. At this time we really let all the preconceptions of what we were as a band fall away, doing this really opened up the field of what to play and how to play it, we also started focusing more on the writing of our bass player Bridget Kearney who is a winner of the John Lennon songwriting contest."

The band went into the studio in 2008 with the new line up and recorded another CD. They signed with Signature Sounds and started touring more consistently. Matt said, "In 2008 and 2009 we ramped everything up. Everyone made themselves more available, we got a record label and a booking agent and we started to get more dates. Having the record label behind us really help us more forward."

For the past two years the band has continued to move forward. After a successful European tour in January of 2011 the band played Wintergrass and then went into the studio to record a new CD titled *This Unknown Science*, which is slated for release in September 2011. The new recording features almost all original material. Matt said, "We have always been a 'left field' bluegrass band, but when Joe left we went even farther out in left field." Matt described the band's new music as "very complicated Indie-rock played on acoustic instruments." He admits, "That's the hardest question to answer. 'What does joy kills sorrow sound like?' It's all based in the string-band tradition but with a really wide view. We, as a band, have lots of respect for traditional musicians, but at the end of the day its just not who we are collectively." Matt said, "There is a lot of counterpoints, layering, and metric modulation." There are no instrumental tunes on the new CD and Matt said that he doesn't even think of the instrumental breaks on the vocal songs as "solos." He said that they are more like "crafted instrumental sections" because no one instrument jumps out to take a solo. All of the instruments play a part in weaving the fabric of the instrumental sections.

Regarding his role in the band, Matt said that he rarely takes a guitar solo and he rarely plays straight bluegrass style rhythm. He said, "My rhythm in this band involves a lot of counterpoint lines and crosspicking. I think more about giving the music texture, dynamics, and feel than providing shredding guitar solos. My role in this band is supportive, but I still don't think of myself as just a rhythm guitar player because what I do interlocks with the other instruments in ways more involved then a boom-chick pattern. I'm playing arpeggiated motions, counterpoint lines, and a variety of chord voicings and partial chords."

Joy Kills Sorrow has a very busy touring schedule this year. In addition to playing a variety of venues all over the United States and Canada, they will also be performing at the Pagosa Folk & Bluegrass Festival in Pagosa Spring, Colorado; the Winnipeg Folk Festival; the Vancouver Folk Festival; Rockygrass in Lyons, Colorado; the Grand Targhee Bluegrass Festival; the Blue Waters Bluegrass Festival; the Four Corners Folk Festival; and the Riverhawk Music Festival. If you'd like to check out Joy Kills Sorrow's music and complete schedule, please visit their website at: http://www.joykillssorrow.com.

Building Arcara Guitars

In addition to playing with the band, Matt has also started building guitars. While in Boston, Matt had started working at a high-end cabinet shop and was beginning to work on building guitars out of his home. His background in woodworking had started when he was a kid helping his dad build an electric guitar and speaker cabinets. He later built a lap dulcimer for his senior project in high school and had worked as a house carpenter the summer before he went to college. In 2008 luthiers Scott Conley and Jon Cooper, of Portland, Maine, decided to start a new business that they would call Acoustic Artisans. The concept was to have a storefront space out of which a number of builders could work. Plans were also made to have an instrument building school at the location.

Matt's friend Joe Walsh, who was living in Portland, Maine, recommended Matt for a position at the new Acoustic Artisans shop. Matt got the job and made the move to Maine. Since that time Matt has helped out with Scott and Jon's workload, taught classes to students, and worked on his own guitars. To date he has built eleven guitars under his own name following the template from the 1930s Martin D-18 models, with some adaptations. Matt uses hide glue, dove tail neck joint, nitro finish, through saddle, and describes his guitars as "very Martinesque."

When asked about how he is modifying the 30s-era Martin design, Matt said, "My guitars are braced a tiny bit stiffer, the sound hole is slightly larger, and I like to put a sound port in the upper bout." Matt believes that the larger sound hole helps the high end to cut a little better. He said, "The larger aperture raises the fundamental resonant frequency of the box and thus brings up the relative pitch. I think that helps bring out

the midrange and treble." He also feels that in addition to allowing the player to hear the guitar better, the sound port also helps to increase the volume of the guitar out front. He said, "When you have more than one sound hole the air is able to move more freely. Banjos, mandolins, f-hole guitars, and the entire violin family have more than one sound hole. When you have more than one sound hole, the air moves more freely and it sounds more open out front. It increases the overall volume."

Matt is taking custom orders for his guitars and also selling his guitar through the Music Emporium in Lexington, Massachusetts. On the Music Emporium website they describe Matt's D-18 style guitar as follows: "The Music Emporium is proud to be the first dealer to carry a guitar from Portland-based luthier, Matt Arcara. A Winfield National Flatpicking Champion himself, Matt has made an impressive leap in a short period of time with his vintage-style instruments appointed and voiced for the modern player (he has recently sold sound-ported Dreadnoughts to guitarists Grant Gordy of The David Grisman Quintet and Mike Mickleson of Bearfoot). This minimally-decorated mahogany Dread is a veritable cannon, with gobs of volume and a huge, wide-open tone that will only get sweeter with play time. For this model, Matt took his inspiration from a friend's 1937 Martin D-18. Much like a classic pre-war, it is lightly built but powerfully voiced. Matt uses the best Adirondack spruce and Honduran mahogany for the tonewoods and hide glue on all the major joints. This instrument presents a very unique option to the player looking for a hand-made guitar at a competitive price." If you are in the market for a new guitar, go to a Joy Kills Sorrow show and ask Matt if you can check out his guitar or you can visit his website here, www.mgaguitars.com.

Matt Arcara working on one of his guitars

Greasy Coat

When I spoke with Matt during our podcast interview at Wintergrass he talked about the music scene in Boston he mentioned that one of the things that he loved about being in Boston was the variety of acoustic music that was played by the musicians in that area. He said, "One thing that makes Boston amazing is that at any given jam you can find bluegrass, old time, Scandinavian, and music from various other traditions. There is a very open-minded music culture there. It opened my ears to a lot of great tunes that made great flatpicking guitar music. There is a huge list of modal old-time tunes that lay out great on the guitar, but not a lot of flatpickers seem to be playing them. These tunes are not that different from something like 'Bill Cheathum.' I think that by learning these types of tunes that a flatpicker can really expand his or her vocabulary."

In order to help readers of our magazine expand their vocabulary, I asked Matt to play and tab out one of his favorite old time tunes. He chose a tune called "Greasy Coat." He has provided a simple version of the tune so that you can familiarize yourself with the melody, and then he has provided a more complex arrangements for those who want a bit of a challenge. The first arrangement is one that includes some crosspicking and could be used if you were playing the tune without accompaniment. The second arrangement (which is not included on the audio CD) is more of a contest style arrangement.

Matt Arcara has come a long way in the ten years since he recorded his first flatpicking CD. As his career continues to blossom, I predict that we will always hear great things coming from Matt Arcara and Matthew Grant Arcara (MGA) guitars.

Audio CD
Tracks 3 & 4

Greasy Coat

Arranged by Matt Arcara

Capo 2

Greasy Coat (con't)

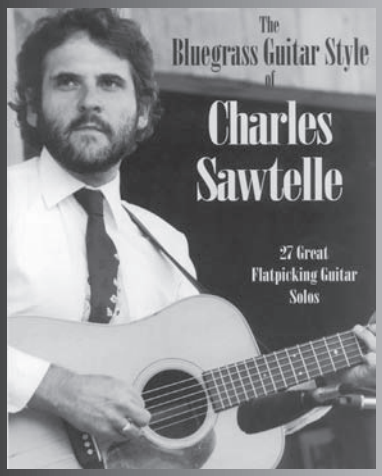
(Advanced Arrangement)

Capo 2

Greasy Coat

Arranged by Matt Arcara

Greasy Coat (con't)



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Bluegrass Rhythm Guitar

by Joe Carr

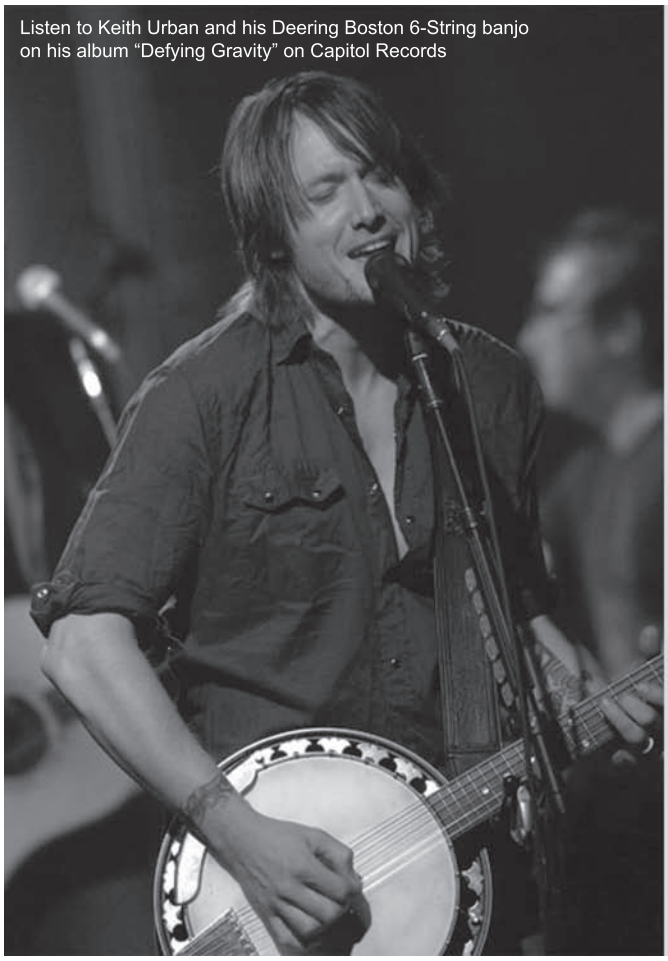
Flatt 5

This time around we'll look at a composition from the fertile and somewhat twisted mind of Austin-based jazz guitarist Slim Richey. Some may remember Slim as the owner of Warehouse Music Sales, a mail order business based in Fort Worth that was one of the first sources of musical merchandise offered at substantial discounts off of suggested retail. In the 1970s, Slim also founded Richey Records that recorded a treasure trove of albums by artists including solo projects by Alan Munde, Roland White, Dave Ferguson, Dan Huckabee and Joe Carr, group albums by Country Gazette and the Country Store and his own unique blend of bluegrass and jazz called Jazzgrass.

Jazzgrass featured a strong blend of experienced jazz players in the lead, rhythm guitar, and bass roles and a host of bluegrass musicians with jazz "chops." The list of soloists included Sam Bush, Richard Greene, Ricky Skaggs, Bill Keith, Alan Munde, Dan Huckabee, Gerald Jones, and Joe Carr. The material included a number of jazz standards and a few Richey originals.

During the recording, Slim showed me his idea for a tune based on Lester Flatt's famous G run. Slim was always presenting his ideas of fun and unusual tunes such as his variation on the famous Django tune "Minor Swing." "Major Swing" features repeating arpeggios of the opening chords just like "Minor Swing" except the chords are now major! The result is an instantly recognized, hilarious, but ultimately boring take on this classic.

But back to the Flatt tune. "Flatt 5" is in 5/4. The best way to think of 5/4 is a waltz measure (3) followed by a measure of two. To count this, say "one, two, three, one, two." In guitar rhythm, it becomes bass, strum, strum, bass, strum. Although the purpose of this article is to teach you to play rhythm in 5/4, you'll also learn a great tune in the process. I use my first finger for the first two notes of the lead in measure one and continue this approach throughout. To jam on these changes, use only the first ending. Save the second ending for when you want to end the piece.



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Audio CD
Tracks 5

Flatt 5

Arranged by Joe Carr

Flatt 5 (con't)

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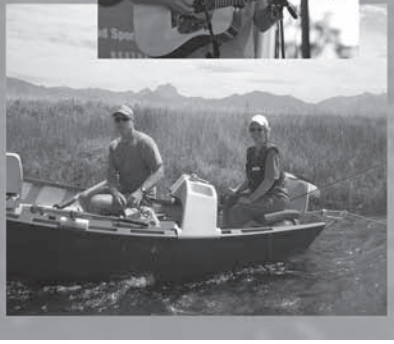


Contact John for more information

406-920-1149 john@johnlowell.com

Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

The Ballad of Jed Clampett

Here's a favorite novelty tune among banjo players but maybe less popular among guitar players. That just might be because it is in G on the banjo, but it really lays out nicely in C on the guitar. Now I'll be the first to admit that it's quite a break from tradition to play it in C, but as you start trying it, you'll find that the key of C sort of transforms it into somewhat of an Earl Scruggs guitar piece. All of a sudden it becomes a song that you could hear being played by Doc Watson, Norman Blake, or even Maybelle Carter.

Aside from the legal implications of playing it in C, the tune lends itself to a really good lesson because it's a really good finger trainer as well as a great lesson for solo design. C is really the guitar key in bluegrass and that may be why so many of Doc Watson's most memorable solos are out of C-position.

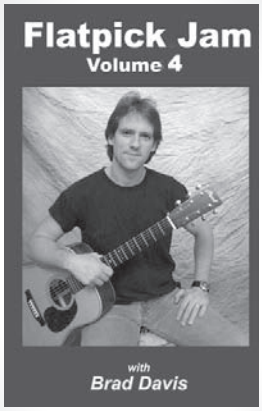
I've chosen to capo to the 4th fret for the audio portion of this lesson, which puts it in the key of E. Most of the details are self explanatory. It only once jumps out of first position, and that's just to match the open G string for the "Earl Scruggs guitar lick" toward the end.

I will warn you that it has one fancy chord: F diminished. I have hard-panned the audio so that you can isolate either the lead or rhythm in either the fast or slow versions which will give you either a jam track or a chance to hear the lead without the clutter.

Take it slow, pay attention to the down-up-down pick directions that are defined by the eighth notes, and you'll get this one up to speed in no time. You may find it to be a real attention getter at festivals this summer.

If you have any questions, give me a call toll free at 800-543-6125. Visit our ad in the back of this issue and check our web site at www.musicians-workshop.com.

WIth Brad Davis' Flatpick Jam



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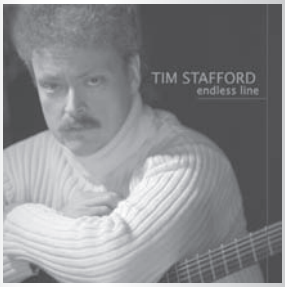
Audio CD
Tracks 7-8

The Ballad of Jed Clampett

Arranged by Dan Huckabee



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Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

Maid Behind The Bar

Hi friends. This is a tune I've played for many years but it wasn't until I worked it up for my *Acoustic Stomp* CD did I make a clear arrangement of it. The first part is pretty straight arrangement and fingerings wise, but the B section is tricky in order to get the real melody in play. This is also a tune developed and explained more in-depth on my *Crowd Pleasers and Show Stoppers* DVD.

Firstly, be sure to use the fingerings and down-up right-hand pick directions as noted and keep that right hand swinging down-up as a pendulum.

You will find that the first measure repeats in four places and I've written the measure with three different timing plays. The first two use hammer-ons from the E to F#, the second with the F# as a quarter note and the third variation of the measure has tied eighth notes. All do the same thing. They emphasize the melody a little differently. This is a wonderful variation of the theme technique. The more of these rhythmic phrasings you know and use the more interesting your play will be.

The B section:

Again watch out for the timings of the slurred notes. The triplet pull-offs should come off with a snap. Dig under the strings with your index and middle fingers and snap them off.

Measure 13: Using the fingerings marked, leave the first and third fingers down for the whole measure and use the fourth finger for the 1st string note that changes.

Measure 14: Use the second and third finger as noted. Hold these notes down and do a roll with the right hand. This sound like a "floatie" or cascading run and three notes should ring out.

That's about it for the "Maid." Have fun with this great tune. Be sure to check out my new web site for other downloads and fun stuff.

Cheers and Bye for now,
Steve Kaufman
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Audio CD
Tracks 10 & 11

Maid Behind the Bar

Arranged by Steve Kaufman

Key of D

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Taking It To The Next Level: Opus 7, #1

by John Carlini

Opus 7, #1
"The Sooner the Better"

The great classical guitarist Andres Segovia developed a scale system for the guitar in which he incorporated some incredible shifting techniques for all left hand fingers. Around 2005 or so I thought, "Why should classical guitarists have all the fun?" So, I dove into those scales and figured them out for pick style guitar, but retaining all of the great master's shifting techniques. I practiced them for a long time, a few years, major and minor scales in all keys, 3 octaves traversing the fingerboard.

I found them to be very helpful exercises…but they are, in fact, scales, and as such, well…yeah. They're scales!

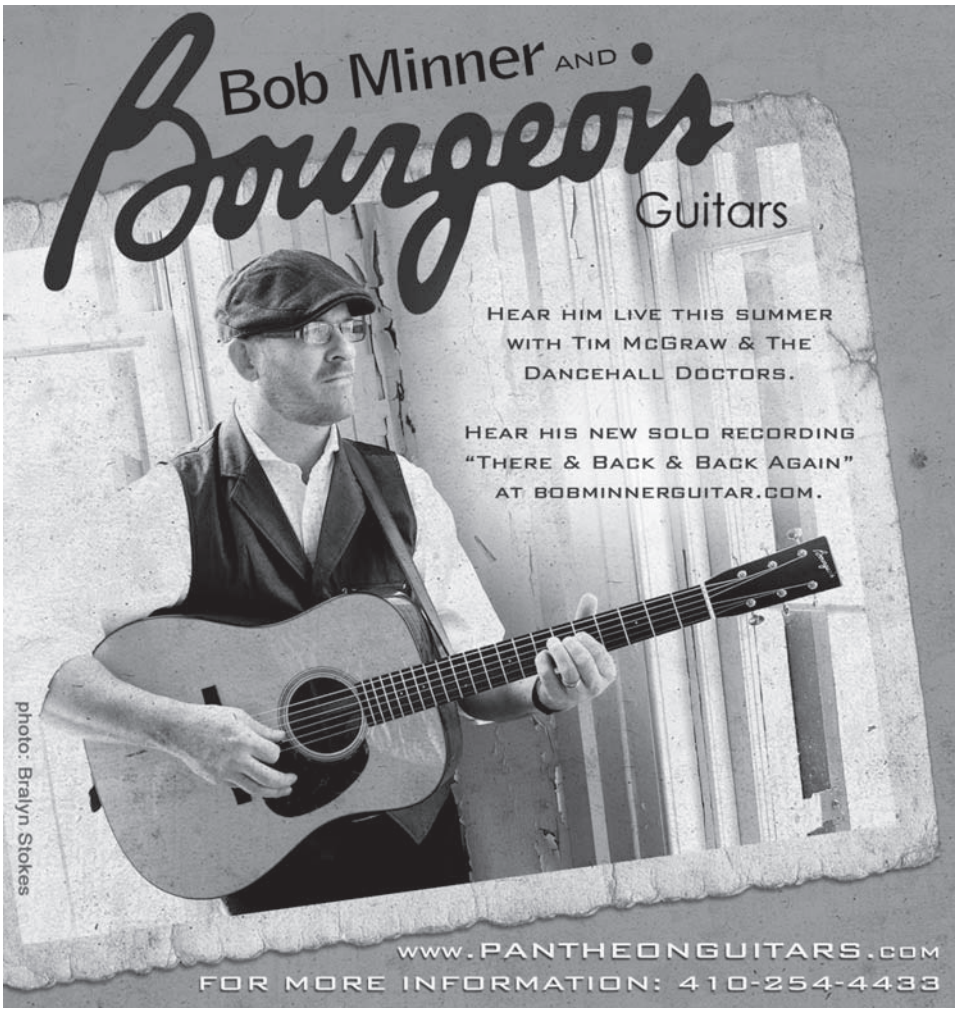
Wouldn't it be fun to compose 12 studies in 12 keys that would be actual compositions incorporating similar finger shifts? That's how Opus 7 came to be. Each study or étude is not only in a different key, but also in a different style. Bebop, swing, bluegrass, arpeggios, scales, country swing, and classical are all represented.

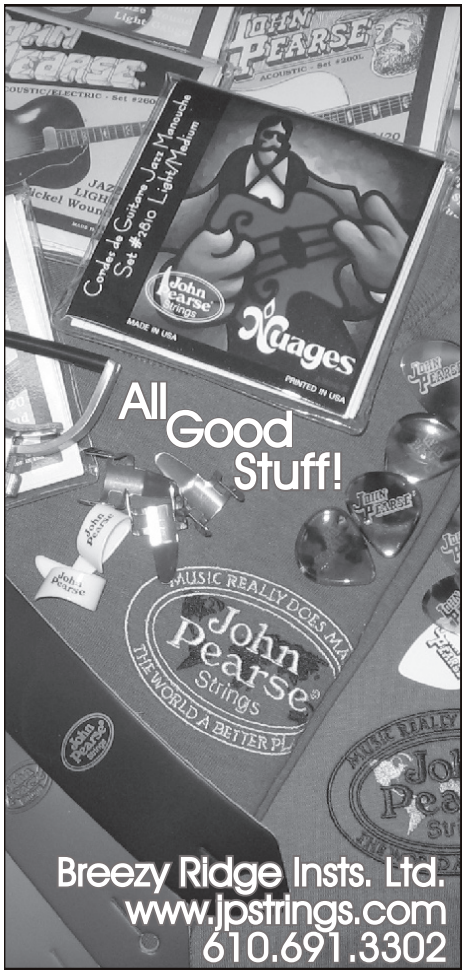
"The Sooner the Better" is the first of the set of 12. It is definitely a scale-type exercise, but that scale is adapting to the chord changes as they occur. Once you have it memorized I think it's fun to play, especially with the rhythm included in the audio.

I am happy to say that Opus 7, #1-12 will be available soon as a *Flatpicking Guitar* publication. But I wanted to share one with you, so…the sooner the better!

By the way: I now play all 12 exercises every day and find them to be a good warm-up!

Please visit John's web site (www.johncarlini.com) to sign up for the latest performance and teaching info and acoustic music news. John is now giving live one-on-one lessons on guitar and 5-string banjo using Skype technology. More info is available on the web site.

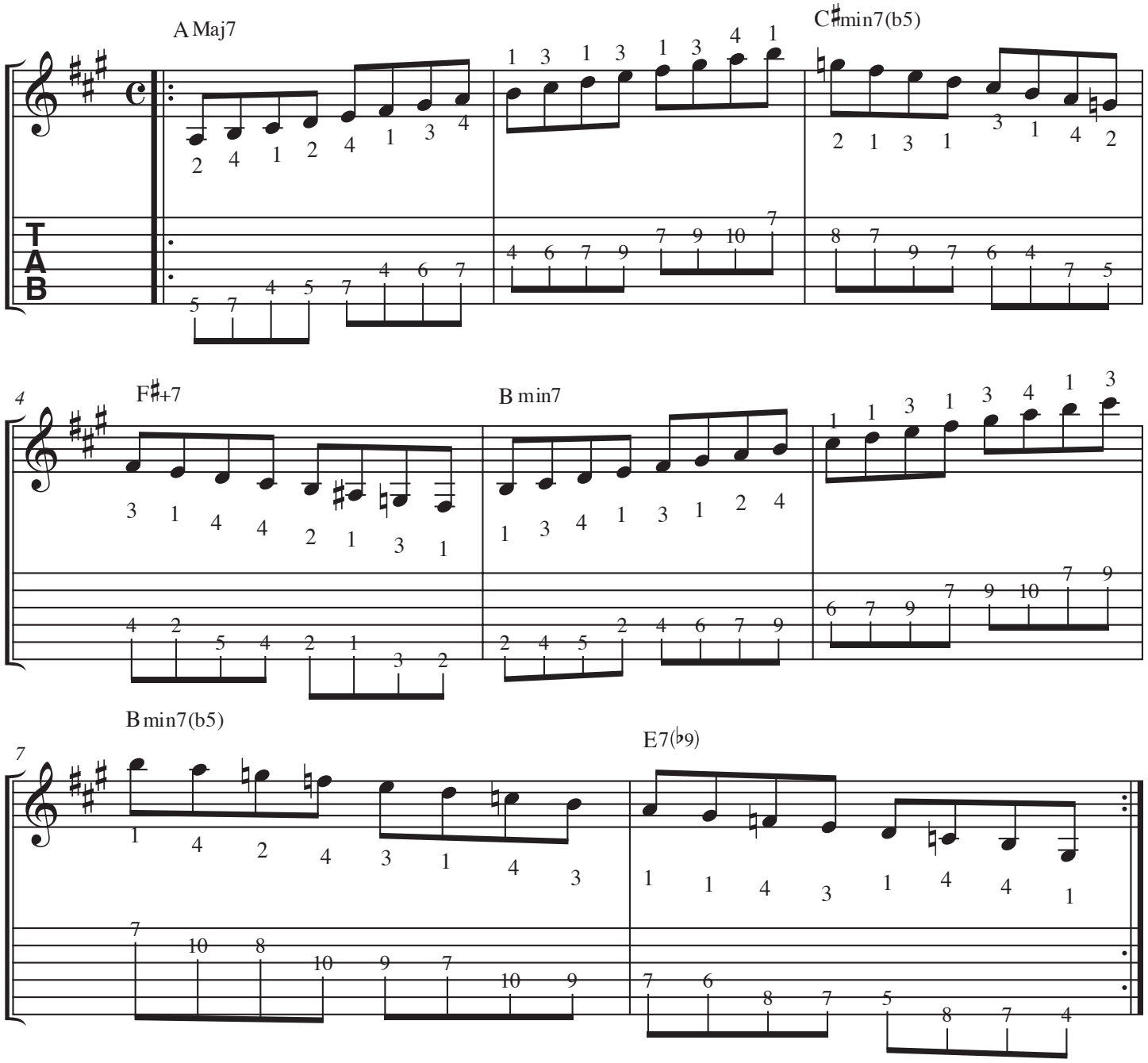




Audio CD
Tracks 12-14

The Sooner the Better

Arranged by John Carlini



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Chords for "The Sooner The Better"

John Carlini

AMaj7

				E2	
					C#4
					G#3
				A1	

5th Fret

C#min7(b5)

				E4	
			B2		
				G3	
			C#1		

4th Fret

F#+7

		C##4			
		A#3			
	E2				
	F#1				

Bmin7

		D2			
	A1				
			F#3		
	B1				

Bmin7(b5)

		D4			
	A2				
		F3			
	B1				

E7(b9)

		F1			
			D3		
		G#1			
			E2		

7th Fret

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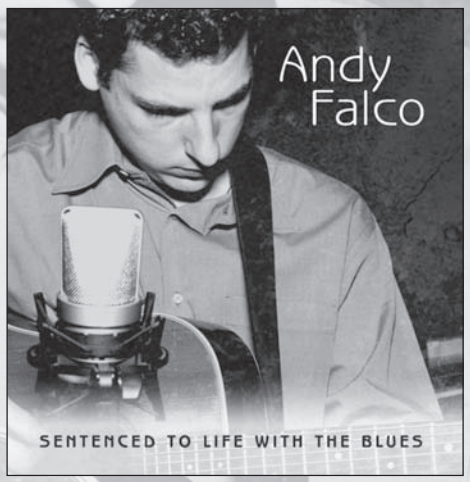

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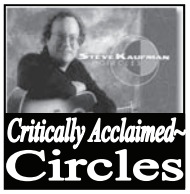

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NASHVILLE FLATTOP

By Brad Davis

Your Love Is Like A Flower

Hello Everyone! I've been away from the magazine for a little while due to a very busy schedule in the studio and on the road. Part of what occupied my time was a tour and studio recording with my good buddies Tim May and Dan Miller. Tim, Dan, and I have been performing together for the past seven years and until this year we'd never gone into the studio to record our material. In January of 2011 Tim and Dan were down in Texas for a two week Davis—Miller—May tour and we decided to spend a few extra days in my studio recording a CD. That CD, titled *Doves, Crows, and Buzzards*, is now available on FGM Records.

One of the tunes that we recorded was the old bluegrass standard "Your Love Is Like A Flower." I thought that this would be a great tune to feature in my column this issue. On the audio CD that accompanies the magazine you will hear the cut from our recording. On the page that follows I've transcribed my guitar solo.

This recording was a lot of fun for me because it gave me the opportunity to exchange guitar solos with Tim May, one of my favorite flatpickers. On the CD you can hear Tim and I trade guitar solos on tunes like "Farewell Blues," "Dinah," "Nine Pound Hammer," and "Angeline the Baker."

I hope that you have fun with my arrangement of "Your Love Is Like A Flower."

~Sing~Explore~Camp~Laugh~Flatpick~Dance~Jam~Relax~

Eat~Jam~Improvise~Pick~Tune~Play

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~Sleep a Little~Fingerpick~Write~Jam~Swim~Connect~

Audio CD
Track 15

Your Love is Like A Flower

Arranged by Brad Davis

Sharpening the Axe
by Jeff Troxel

Clash of the Tartans

My last few columns have dealt with solo guitar arrangements played in the upper positions. This edition will continue that theme. I'd like to present one of my original tunes, "Clash of the Tartans." I wrote this tune as a duet where one player plays the written part while the other improvises along with it. In that spirit, and given the title of the song, a certain amount of dissonance is not only inevitable, but expected.

The intro and ending on the recording aren't written out, but you can make up your own or leave them out. The improvised part is being played by my good friend and outstanding fiddler Trevor Krieger, but this arrangement would work with any instrument playing the improvised part. The second player could use notes from E Dorian (E F# G A B C# D), E Aeolian (E F# G A B C D), or even an E blues scale (E G A A# B D). Let your ear be the guide.

Although this was written as a duet, the main part stands well on its own as a solo piece. The open 1st and 2nd strings help fill in the chordal sound while the melody weaves its way around them. Pay close attention to the fingerings since the timbral effect of upper position fretted notes against open notes helps give the song its character. The slurred notes are also a key element in this arrangement. Make sure the hammer-ons are clean and even, and avoid the tendency to rush.

Once mastered, this song can make a nice addition to your repertoire. Try creating some variations on it for an extended solo piece. You can also experiment with different chords if you prefer to simplify the harmony.

I hope you enjoy playing "Clash of the Tartans." As always, feel free to email me with any questions that come up. Good luck, and I'll catch you next time.

The Guitar Player's Guide to Developing
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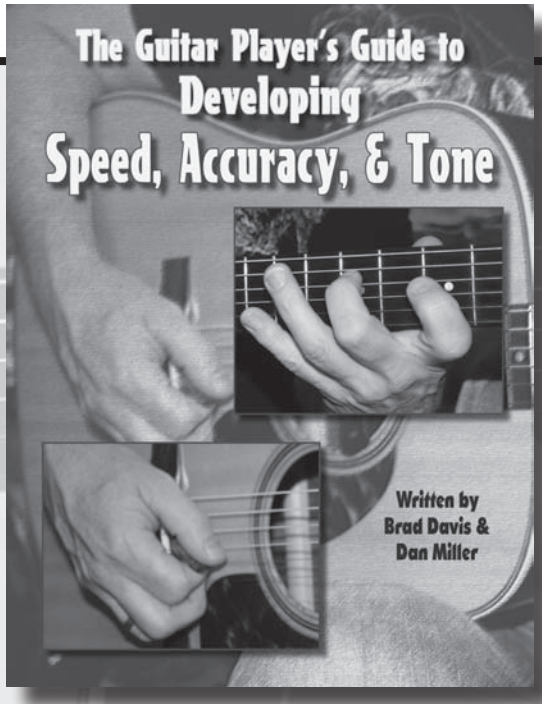
by Brad Davis & Dan Miller



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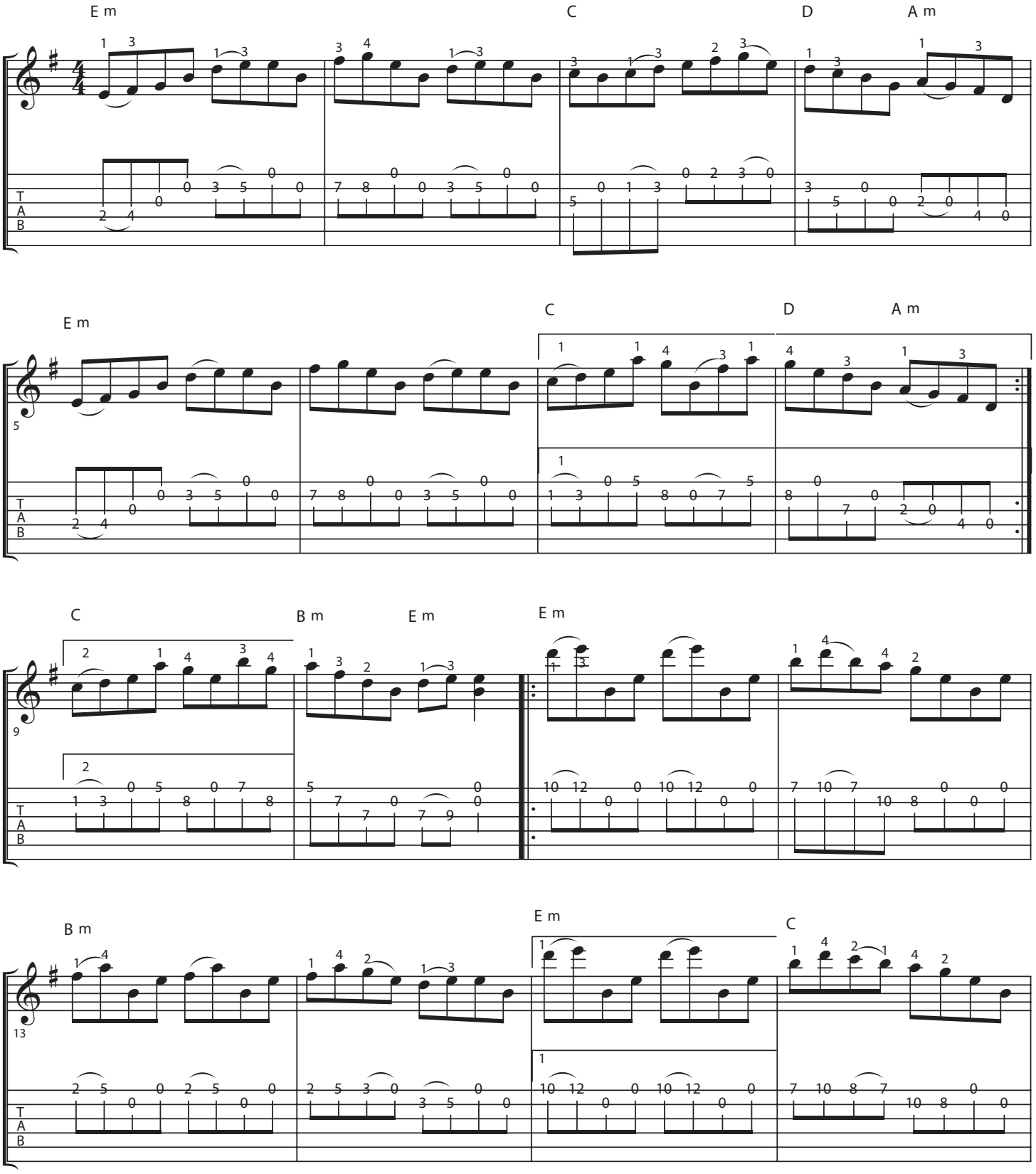

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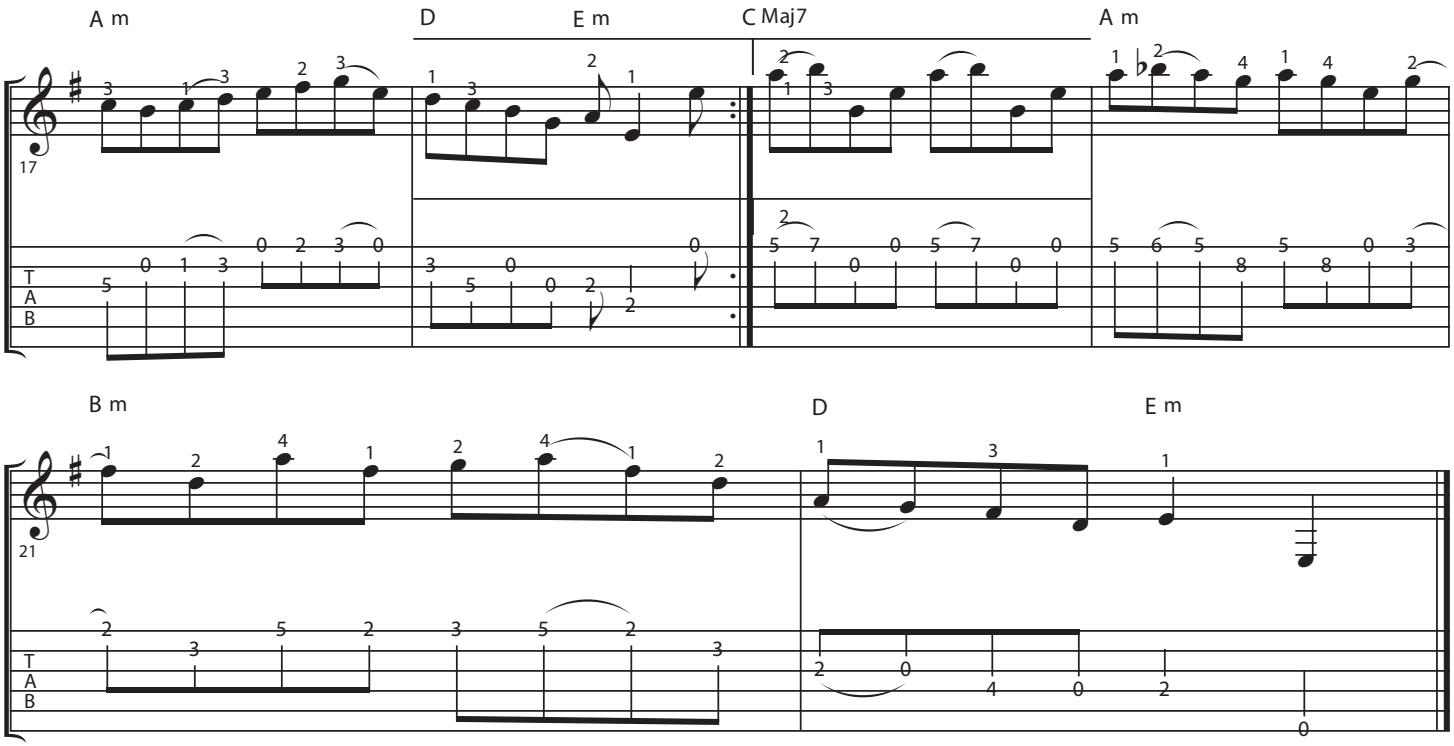

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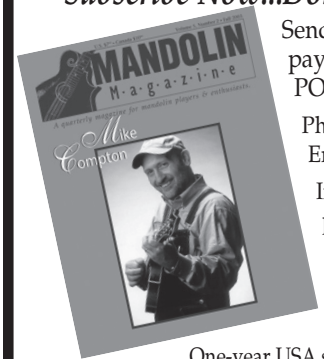

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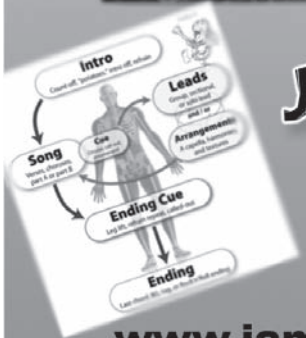

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"Nashville Blues"
by Kathy Barwick

Hi there! For this issue I'm presenting the first solo on the first cut of my new recording *In My Life* (available from the Flatpicking Mercantile at flatpickingmercantile.com).

"Nashville Blues" is a great Earl Scruggs tune that, in its simplicity, provides ample opportunity to both play the melody and do interesting variations on it. The most distinctive feature of this tune is one measure late in the tune where you raise the F natural to an F sharp. Otherwise it's pretty straightforward, and bears some resemblance to "Reuben's Train."

For this column we'll just look at the first solo. First off, note that the tune is in Dm, and I'm playing in "drop D" tuning. Just lower the 6th string one full step from E to D.

I'm going to use some specific fingerings for different sections of the solo. See Figure 1. I'm going to start out with two fingers fretting the 2nd string. There's a lot of D to C going on, and starting with this hand position will let me focus on the right hand, which is where all the action is.

Left-hand fingering notes:

1. As noted, start off in the Fig. 1 position. At the end of the first (introductory) measure, lift your fourth finger (pinky) off the 3rd fret, then put it right back down for the start of M2. This strategy works for measures 2-3, 6-7, and 10-11
2. Play M4 with your index on the 2nd string 1st fret all the way through. Don't lift your index off that fret until M8, even if you're not playing the C note. This lends stability to your left hand and also ensures that if you play the B string you'll hit a C rather than a B note.
3. At the start of M8, leave your middle finger on the A note (3rd string 2nd fret) and move your index to the E note (4th string 2nd fret). Now technically you don't have to do that until M9, but I put it down by the second beat of M8. This gives my right hand much more leeway to play interesting stuff. Or, to look at it another way, if it is imprecise and hits the wrong string, well if I'm holding the chord down, then no matter.
4. On beat 3 of M9, keep your middle finger on the A note and shift the index back to the C (2nd string 1st fret).
5. In M10 I'm back to the fingering in Fig. 1.
6. Play M11 as you did M4, with the index finger on the C note. In fact, keep that index down all the way through M16.
7. In M16 you have 2 fingers down: index on 2nd string 1st fret and middle finger on the 3rd string 2nd fret. The last note in that measure is a "ghost" note. I didn't mean to play that F note, but when I slow it way down I can hear it. What's happening there is I'm setting up to slide into the F sharp that happens in the next measure.
8. Use the fingering in Figure 2 for M17. You slide from the F natural to the F sharp with your ring finger.
9. Play M18-20 holding the index on that C note. By the middle of M20 I've put my middle finger back on the 3rd string 2nd fret as well.

There's some cool things about this tune. Playing the melody out of the chord makes your right hand find the melody notes in the chord. In keeping with my last few columns, this approach allows the right hand to strum – or crosspick – over the held chord (or partial chord, as in measures 4, 12, etc). Since most of the "main" melody notes are in chords, then you can focus your right hand on those notes. To think about how this works, study measures 2-3, 6-7, and 10-11. These two-measure segments are all melodically the same, but you see there are different ways of phrasing it. (This by the way IS the secret of the banjo.... embedding those melody notes into rolls....)

I hope you enjoy this little excursion into playing the banjo on the guitar!

Kathy Barwick has played guitar since the late 1960s, when she learned folk-style fingerpicking. Kathy also plays banjo resophonic guitar and acoustic bass, and has performed over the years with various bluegrass bands. A founding member of The All Girl Boys, Kathy now plays resophonic guitar with Mountain Laurel, a bluegrass band based in the Grass Valley area of northern California. Kathy is the guitarist in the Irish band Nine-8ths Irish (www.nine8thsirish.com). A Sacramento resident, Kathy teaches at music camps and gives private lessons on guitar, resophonic guitar, banjo, and bass, and has just completed her first solo recording, In My Life, on the FGM label. She welcomes your feedback and/or comments. Contact her at kbarguitar@yahoo.com or visit on the web at www.kathybarwick.net.

Figure 1:

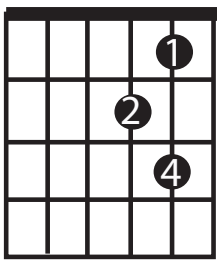
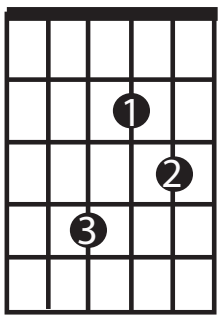


Figure 2: (D chord)



Nashville Blues

Audio CD
Tracks 17 - 18

Drop D Tuning

Arranged by Kathy Barwick

Flatpick Profile: Reggie Harris

by Dan Miller

Reggie Harris picking on Wayne Henderson's pre-war Martin D-45

For the past few years I've heard the name Reggie Harris come up in my conversations with flatpicking guitar players more than a few times. Every time I talk with a flatpicker from North Carolina or the southern part of Virginia, inevitably they'll say, "Have you heard Reggie Harris? You need to write an article about him!" This past April at Merlefest I was talking with North Carolina multi-instrumentalist Jim Ashton about his new banjo CD. Jim handed me a copy and said, "I got Reggie Harris to play some guitar on it." I said, "You know Reggie Harris? How can I get a hold of him? I keep hearing about this guy." Jim said, "I think that he is going to be here on Sunday. I'll give him a call and ask him to stop by your booth." I was looking forward to it.

By the time Sunday rolled around the possibility of Reggie coming by the booth was in the back of my mind, but I was mostly busy talking with customers. Robert Bowlin had been hanging around the booth that afternoon and as I was occupied helping a customer I noticed Robert in the background talking with someone. After I finished helping that particular customer, Robert walked up with this guy and said, "Dan, this is my friend Reggie Harris. He is a great musician." Finally, the connection was made! Reggie and I arranged to talk later that week on the phone and prepare an article for the magazine. It is still amazing to me that after publishing *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* for fifteen years that guys who are as talented as Reggie, and who have been around as long as he has, keep popping up. It is a wonderful thing!

North Carolina is very rich in roots music and Reggie Harris grew up right in the middle of it in the town of Lenoir. Reggie said that as a kid he was exposed to "piles of guitar players." Reggie's father played the guitar, his older brother played, his cousins played and Reggie said, "My uncle Cecil Palmer is a masterful player in the Chet Atkins and Merle Travis styles. He can also flatpick fiddle tunes with a thumb pick."

At the age of five or six, in about 1974, Reggie was given a small guitar as a gift for participating in his cousin's wedding. His older brother, Mark, ten years his senior, started showing him chords. Reggie said, "He would show me how to play a chord and then I'd hold that chord while walking back to my room and I would practice."

Reggie also recalls laying on the floor and listening to the older folks play music. He said, "Dad (Charles Harris) was a good clean and steady rhythm player and a good singer. He could pick in the style of the Carter Family. The main thing he would talk to me about was timing and playing clearly. Uncle Cecil was a good lead player. I figured out a lot of stuff on the guitar by watching and listening."

When he first started playing the guitar Reggie used a thumb pick. He said, "Someone saw me playing with a thumb pick one day and told me that I shouldn't be doing that. So I switch and started playing with a flatpick when I was about ten years old. But I still use a thumb pick and bare fingers occasionally."

Thinking back on his younger days, Reggie added, "Besides what my Dad and Uncle played, I picked a lot with my cousin Brent, Cecil's son. He showed me some songs early on. My brother Mark was more Doc Watson and rock on eight track tapes, and my older sister, Debbie, listened to rock and folk rock. My sister had lots of albums and would swap records sometimes with the neighbor girls. I'll never forget when she brought home a Jimi Hendrix album. She had an influenced me that way. My mother, Joyce, also played me records before I was big enough to change a record myself and we listened to the radio."

As a youngster Reggie was exposed to all kinds of music and says, "I've always liked every kind of music. My Dad played country and hillbilly music, my older brother and my uncle played about everything." He first learned how to strum chords and play rhythm and then he later began picking out melodies on his own to songs like "Tom Dooley." Eventually he was also learning Bob Dylan tunes and more complex chord progression to tunes like "House of the Rising Sun." By the age of nine or ten he was playing at house pickin' parties and by the age of eleven or twelve he was also playing the banjo. Reggie said, "I was playing at house parties, picnics, and jam

sessions. As I got better people started dropping by the house to pick and in eighth grade I was playing in a garage band with a few classmates. I was into Lynyrd Skynyrd big time! After that I was always in some kind of rock or blues band."

In addition to playing in rock bands throughout his high school years, Reggie had also been listening to and explored traditional music. Doc Watson lived just about 40 miles away from Reggie's hometown and he would listen to Doc and Merle Watson records. He said he especially liked Merle's slide guitar playing and to this day he still plays a lot of slide guitar.

By the time Reggie was in ninth grade he had discovered Tony Rice, then David Grisman, then Django Reinhardt and Gypsy jazz. He was also a big Allman Brothers fan. Reggie said, "I was always finding something new that would take my playing in another direction." He joined his first professional band while he was still in the twelfth grade. He said, "These guys were ten years my senior, the band was called South City and we played country-rock. I played guitar and banjo. We played a lot of clubs, had lots of equipment, and had our own truck. I thought I was on my way! I stayed with one form of this band or another for about four years. At one point the name changed and we played mostly top 40. I liked it better when it was country-rock. From there I formed a good classic rock band, but we never played many gigs. We had a rehearsal building and I was already rehearsing and holding jam sessions for my next more blues and jam-based project. I basically wanted to get out of playing in bands that played everything note-for-note. I wanted to be free and I have stayed that way ever since."

By the time Reggie was 19, and still playing with South City, he joined an acoustic trio that called themselves "Strictly Clean and Decent." That band consisted of Reggie on guitar, George Shuffler's younger brother Ron Shuffler on bass, and Patrick Crouch on guitar, banjo, and mandolin. Recalling those days, Ron Shuffler said, "Reggie is one the most versatile guitar players that I have ever met and have had the privilege of playing music with. I have known Reggie since he was a kid and to watch his continual growth as a player has been interesting, to say the least. We played in a trio along with Patrick Crouch from 1988-1990. The group was Strictly, Clean, and Decent and Patrick and I, along with Patrick's wife Kay, are still performing as SCD. I believe Reggie was in his late teens through those years and was absolutely amazing. We were doing a very wide range of music from Django, to New Grass Revival, to pop standards, to traditional bluegrass, to swing—really no limits. He was playing mostly guitar, although he plays all instruments, and we were all singing. He was learning at the speed of light and has never stopped. In addition to being a true 'Super Picker,' Reggie is one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. I still sit in with he and his brother Ryan on occasion and we always have a blast. Reggie is really the complete package when it comes to playing guitar."

Starting in 1989 Reggie spent three seasons playing in a country band at the Tweetsie Railroad Wild West theme park in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Reggie joined his younger brother Ryan (bass), Alan Johnson (fiddle), and Jason Burleson (banjo). He said, "At first it was a country band, but it turned into bluegrass." Around that same time Reggie and his brother also started playing acoustic gigs together.

In the early 1990s Reggie made the move to Nashville with a girlfriend, however, he only stayed for about a year. Regarding the short stay in Nashville, Reggie said, "I enjoy the freedom of doing my own thing and making money. I was young and not much into new country."

Although he had spent quite a bit of time playing in rock and blues bands when he was a teenager, as he got older Reggie gravitated more towards roots music, acoustic blues, and jazz. By the time he was twenty-six he had developed his jazz chops to the extent that his playing caught the ear of fiddle legend Vassar Clements. In 1994 Vassar hired Reggie to play on his *Vassar's Jazz* recording. Work on that CD led to touring with Vassar off and on—two to three weeks at a time—for years. Reggie also participated in the recording of a Grateful Dead tribute titled *Deadgrass* featuring Vassar Clements (1999).

The acoustic duo gigs that Reggie started performing with his brother in the early 1990s have turned into his main gig for nearly twenty years now. Reggie said, "Performing with Ryan in a duo is what I like best." The duo has a vast repertoire

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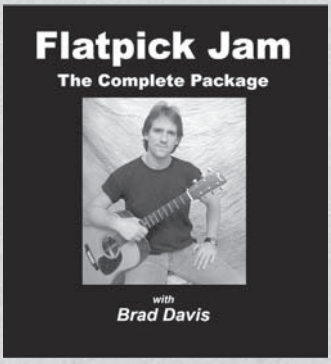

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and they draw from traditional roots music, swing, jazz, blues, rock & roll, Appalachian mountain music, and country. The duo's instrumentation is an acoustic guitar, a bass, and a suitcase (with Reggie sometimes switching over to fiddle, banjo, or electric guitar). Yes, you did read that correctly…a suitcase. Reggie puts a microphone on an old suitcase and stomps on a kick drum pedal to provide an innovative "thump drum" sound in the mix.

The Harris Brothers are a popular act in North Carolina and Virginia and have traveled all over the east coast and mid-west. They play everywhere from honky tonks to music festival stages and they have recorded two CDs. Describing their music, their website says, "they have a special way of making the music their own; it's stripped down, intense, and real, with no gimmicks." If you want to hear a little of the Harris Brothers sound, check out any one of a dozen of their videos on You Tube. Reggie's picking on the J. J. Cale tune "If Your Ever In Oklahoma" is awesome and their delivery of "Rock Salt and Nails" is also very impressive.

Regarding his approach to the guitar, Reggie said, "I have always just played off the cuff. I've always tried to listen to something and then play in that style without copying. I listen to and play a lot of different kinds of music, but I've never memorized a solo. I leave myself free to improvise and keep it fresh."

Although Reggie has an impressive collection of guitars, he said that when he is on stage he usually uses his 1971 D-18 or his 1989 000-16. He said that he likes the 000-16 because it is a versatile guitar good for playing a lot of different styles of music. Although he owns several Martin guitars and a number of old Gibson J-35 style guitars, Reggie said that in general he likes to use mahogany Martin guitars when he performs. For this issue's audio CD, Reggie recorded "Old Joe Clark" with a 1957 D-18 for rhythm and a 1965 D-21 for lead.

In addition to performing with is brother, Reggie also teaches private lesson on banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and guitar. He teaches students of all ages, "from home school kids to senior citizens." Regarding the guitar lessons, Reggie said that he mostly teaches traditional flatpicking. He starts his new students with a solid foundation in rhythm. After they have a good feel for basic rhythm he will then teach them how to add bass runs and fills licks into their rhythm playing and then transitions them to playing lead. Most importantly, he likes to get students playing music with another person as soon as possible. He said, "I'll teach them to hold the rhythm down with the G and D7 chords in a song like 'Cumberland Gap.' Once they get the hang of that I'll pick up the banjo and have them play along. Now they are playing music!"

Reggie is primarily a self-taught musician and so he encourages his students to explore music on their own. He said the things that he likes to teach his students are the "short cuts." He said, "I like to show my students things that are going to make it easier for them to learn. I like to encourage them to figure things out on their own and then I give them hints to help them along the way. There are a couple of people that I taught when they were kids that are now out making money at it."

When I asked Reggie if he would like to record something for our audio CD, he suggested a standard fiddle tune played out of the A position. He said, "Sometimes, for traditional fiddle tunes, I like to pick out of straight A. I don't always rely on G or C." What Reggie sent in was an awesome jazzy version of the old fiddle standard "Old Joe Clark." Listen to the entire cut on the CD to get a feel for Reggie's talent on the guitar and then take a look at the tab that Reggie supplied so that you can give some of those licks a try! And if you ever get a chance to see the Harris Brothers perform, don't pass it by. Short of that, check them out on YouTube. It is impressive stuff!

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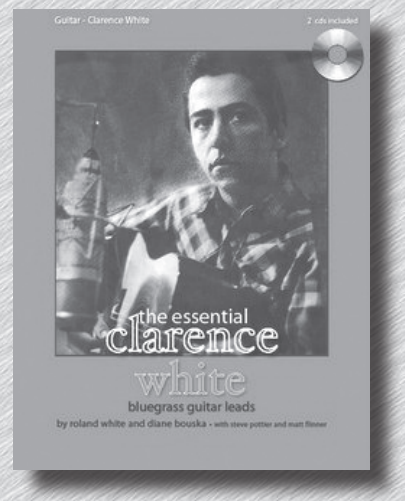

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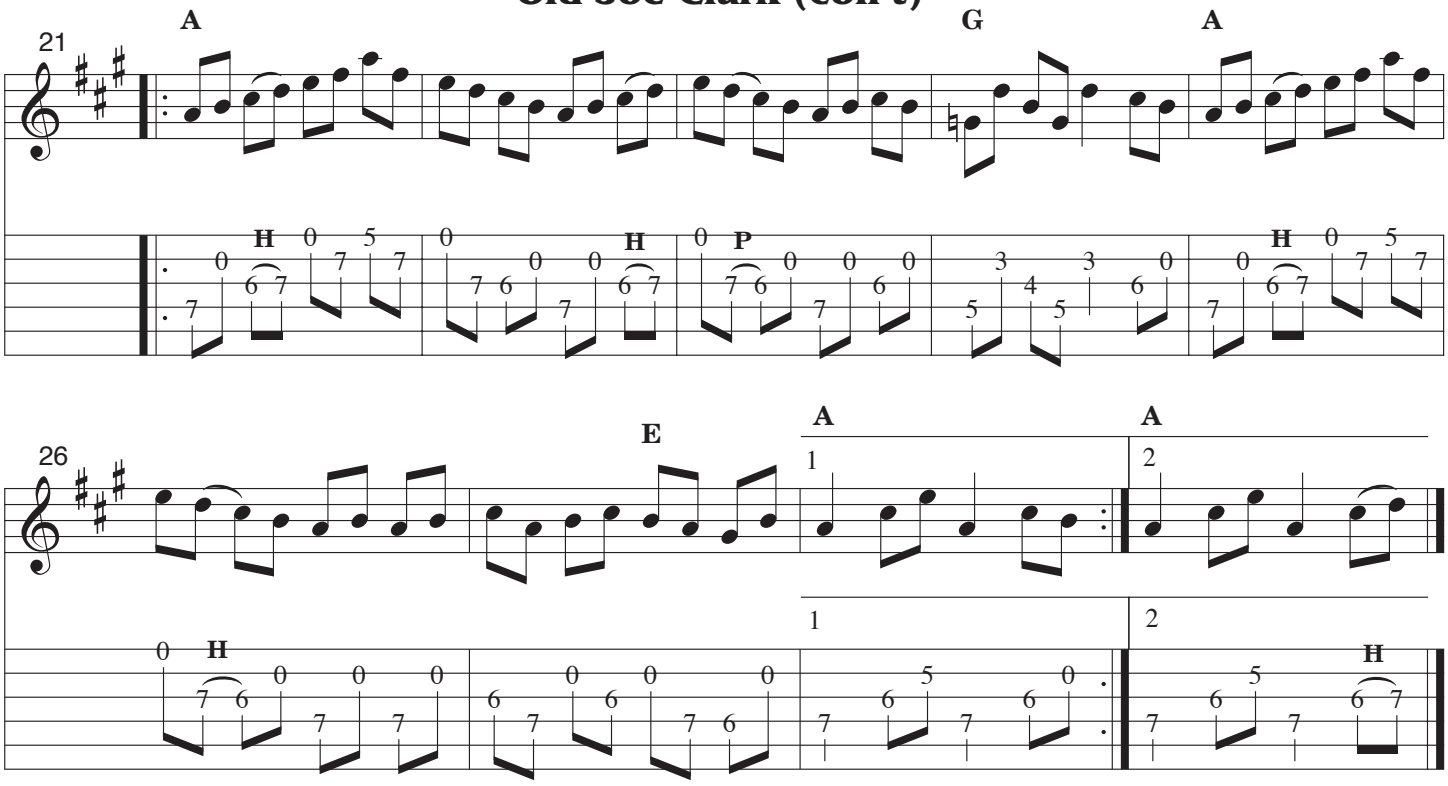
Audio CD
Track 19

Old Joe Clark

Arranged by Reginald Harris

Old Joe Clark (con't)



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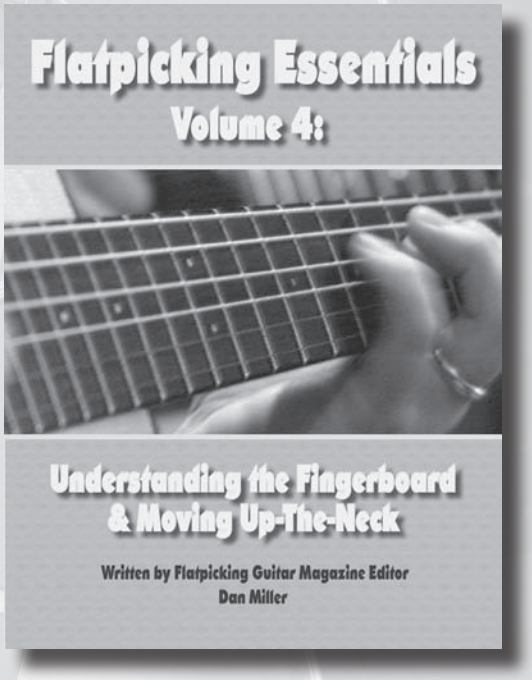

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THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Fisher's Hornpipe

"Fisher's" is a fiddle tune in D popular in both traditional American and Irish music. One thing I like about it is that it sounds good played at a variety of speeds, from rollicking (at contradances, where I play it on mandolin or tenor banjo) to more lyrical (as in this arrangement).

But achieving lyricism doesn't happen automatically: it requires right-hand finesse and playing with dynamics. (In particular, by accenting key melody notes and making judicious use of hammer-ons and pull-offs you end up with a nicer-sounding rendition than one with an unremitting cascade of tick-a tick-a—one of the banes of flatpicking.)

On guitar I like to play this tune in C (capoed at the second fret) since the A-part flows so organically there. Also, since the A-part entails both crosspicking and bass notes, "Fisher's" lends itself to solo playing in a way that many other tunes do not.

While the A-parts in this arrangement are mostly the same, I vary things considerably in the B-parts, moving up the neck some and deploying some floating licks the second time around.

One important feature of this arrangement is the decision to play certain B notes on the 4th fret of the G string instead of on the open B string. This is a guitar-specific dynamic choice that all flatpickers should be aware of (since they sound very different) and which many an arrangement can profit from.

The last thing to note is that you can alter the flavor of certain phrases by letting certain notes linger. For example, if you let the F note in measure 15 ring while you work your way up to the C on the 2nd string, that gives the phrase a nicely dark flavor. Likewise, playing the F notes in the A-part with your pinky instead of with your ring (while holding the C bass note with said ring) also yields a nice modal tinge.

Orrin Star (www.orrinstar.com) is an award-winning guitar, banjo & mandolin player based in the Washington, DC area. The 1976 National Flatpicking Champion, he has toured and recorded widely, is the author of Hot Licks for Bluegrass Guitar, and performs mostly solo and duo. He offers private music instruction both in person and online.

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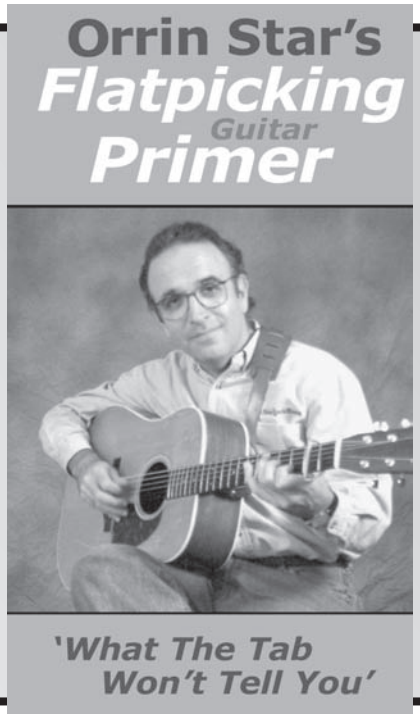
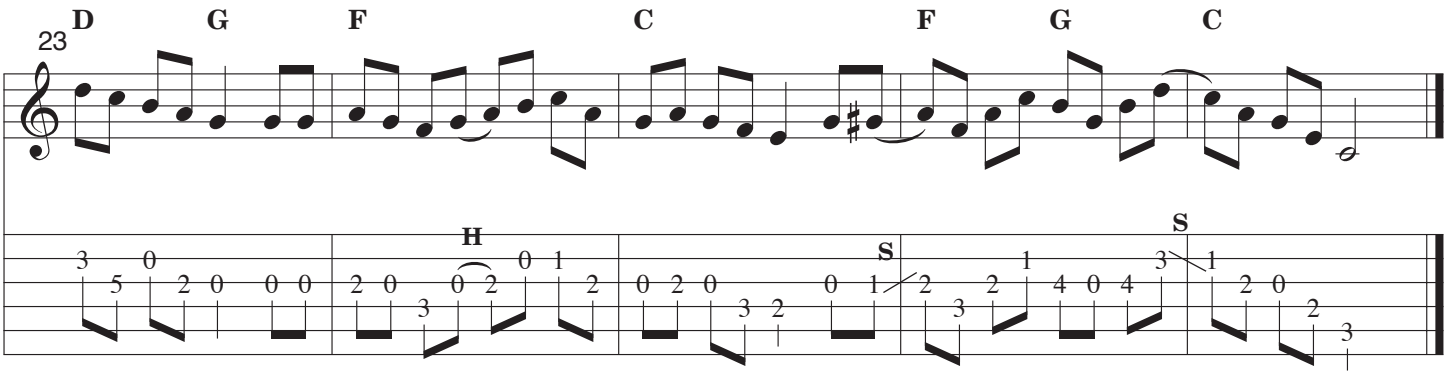


Audio CD
Tracks 21 & 22

Fisher's Hornpipe

Arranged by Orrin Star

Fisher's Hornpipe (con't)



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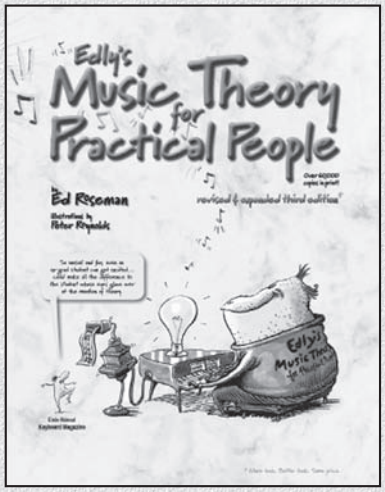

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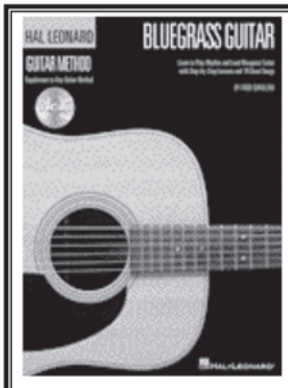

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Chinatown, My Chinatown

by Dix Bruce

Whether you are a long-time reader or casual browser of this column, you probably know that I have certain set ways of approaching new songs. In many columns, I have urged you to develop similar routines to get yourself inside of a song, to learn it backwards and forwards in order to understand it. It's not important that you do the exact things that I do but you should have a plan that leads you to work through a song and learn what it's all about. The goal, of course, is to play it better than you would without this knowledge.

The first thing I do when learning a new song is to look at the chord progression. I try to locate familiar chord patterns, unfamiliar chords, or unusual combinations of chords. I look for the logic of the chord progression and try to determine the way it unwinds.

Next I learn the melody. The melody is the song. After all, nobody hums or whistles a chord progression! If you don't know the melody, you can't play the song. Yes, you can play the chords but you really need to know the melody in order to play leads. Even if you play a solo that's far removed from that melody it still should be rooted in the melody. Otherwise your solo has no context. It could be an improvisation on any song.

Once I have the chord progression and the melody learned, I'm in pretty good shape to play the song — at least one way. As soon as I can play the chords and melody, I want to expand on both and add other ways of playing them. I'm eager to come up with as many variations as I can. As far as the chord progression goes, I'll try playing other inversions of the same chords further up and down the fingerboard. If I'm playing the type of song or style that would allow it, I might look for extensions or substitutions to the chords.

To get myself deeper into the melody, solos, and improvising, I work through a few exercises that never fail to teach me new things about a song. Over the years I've taken you through some of those exercises in this column. I demonstrate several of them in a YouTube video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKxxPTmVH3s). In the video I work with the melody and soloing on the song "Whispering" from my *Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm, Volume I* book/CD set.

The first thing I usually do is learn the melody in a closed position with no open strings. Once I can play a melody in closed position, I can fairly easily move it to any other key. And, if I work out a solo/improvisation in a closed position I can move that to any key too. Ain't music amazing?

Once I have the closed position melody worked out, I try to move it up or down an octave. Doing that opens up a whole range of playing possibilities for me. Let's say I use the melody, with or without open strings, as my first solo. My second solo could be virtually the same melody moved up or down an octave. I could change it a little, just to keep things interesting, or I could change it a lot and create a third solo.

As I work with the melody I try to analyze how it moves phrase-by-phrase, similar to what I did with the chord progression. If the original phrase ascends I'll try to reverse it and play something comparable rhythmically that descends, and vice versa. This can be a great motivator for improvisation as it leads you to discover phrases that fit rhythmically with the melody but are different melodically.

If the tune allows it, I'll try converting the melody to a chord melody where I strum the chord and simultaneously play the melody note on strings one or two. Jazz guitarists use the chord melody technique extensively and it can be challenging to play. Still, it sounds wonderful and adding a few chord melody passages to your repertoire allows you to throw a bit in here and there as you're compiling an improvisation.

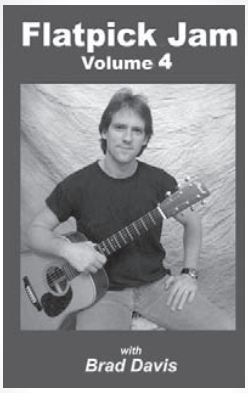
Another technique I try out on new songs, and this will be the main subject of our column, is to play the melody in octaves. Playing the melody in octaves is different from moving a melody up or down an octave. Here we'll play two notes an octave apart on every melody note. Django Reinhardt often used octaves in his solos. Wes Montgomery made octaves a defining element of his style. Just about every jazz guitar player slips them in from time to time and most of the more modern flatpickers use octaves also.

Before we get into playing octaves on the old standard "Chinatown, My Chinatown," let's work through the first two points I made above and get acquainted with the chord progression and melody of the song. This version of "Chinatown, My Chinatown" is from my *Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm, Volume II* book/CD set. The chords are shown below.

Next learn the melody, shown on page 41 in a closed position. Try to memorize it. Being able to hear the melody in your head will be a great help as you attempt the octaves.

There's a technique to playing melodies in octaves on the guitar. Once you learn the basics you can play octaves on any lead. We'll play octaves on string pairs 1 and 3, 2 and 4, 3 and 5, and 4 and 6. For string pairs 1 and 3 and 2 and 4, we'll use our first and fourth fretting fingers. For the other octave pairs on strings 3 and 5, and 4

WIth Brad Davis' Flatpick Jam



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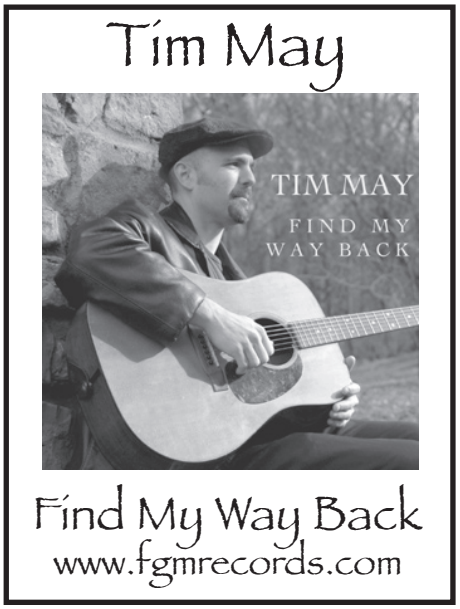
and 6 we'll use our first and third fretting fingers. As you look at your fingers on the fingerboard ((see diagram below) see that when we play an octave on strings 1 and 3 or 2 and 4 with fretting fingers one and four, we have two open and unfretted frets between the lower and higher notes. When we play an octave on strings 3 and 5 or 4 and 6 with fretting fingers one and three, we have only one open and unfretted fret between the lower and higher notes. Making those visual connections will help keep your octave locations correct. Fretting fingers suggestions are shown in the music between the standard notation and tablature staves.

As always, take things slowly until you've taught your brain and fingers how to work together. (I'm still working on this every day!) Then gradually build up the speed. You'll hear excerpts from the slow and up-to-speed band versions of "Chinatown, My Chinatown" from *Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm, Volume II* on the FGM CD. With the full versions from the book/CD set, you can practice slow and up-to-speed octaves, melodies, chords, solos, and more to your heart's content while backed up by a Hot Club-style band. In fact, we'll jam all night long!

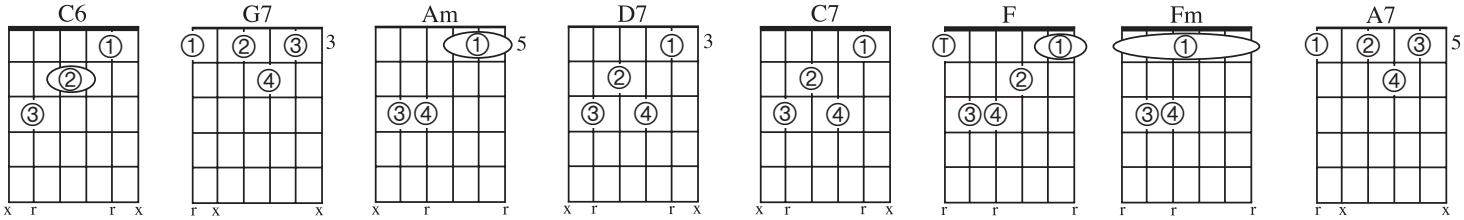
After you've mastered the octaves version of "Chinatown, My Chinatown," try moving the closed single note melody to other keys. Make sure you identify what key you've transposed to each time. Can you move the closed position melody up or down an octave in the same key? Good luck!

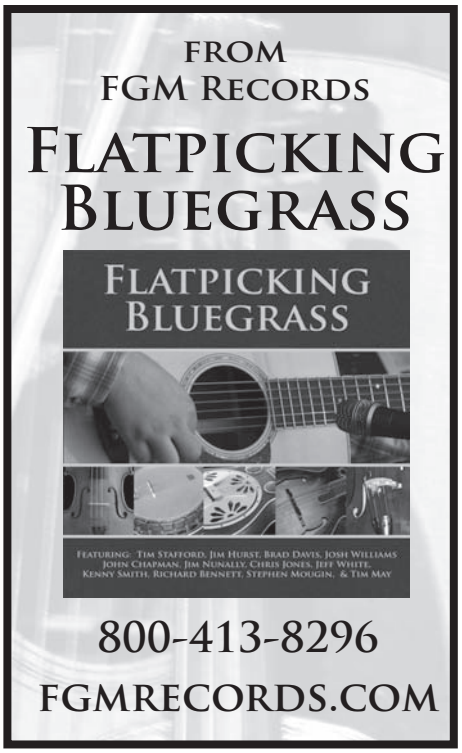
Be sure to check out the Musix Newsletters section of my website (www.musixnow.com). Lots of free TAB and MP3s to download and learn.

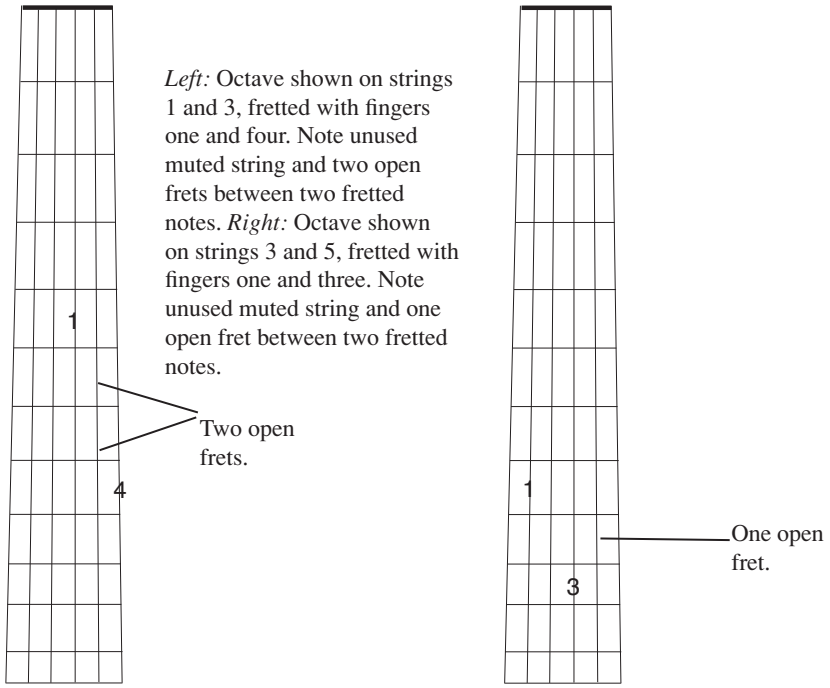
D*ix's latest book/CD sets: Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm Vol. I & II" (separate editions for guitar & mandolin) "Christmas Favorites for Solo Guitar: Best Loved Traditional Songs for Bluegrass Guitar." By the time you read this the latest version of "The Parking Lot Picker's Songbook, Bass Edition" will be in print. It includes bass lines, step-by-step instruction on how to compose them, and info on transposing any song to any key! Email Dix at: contact@musixnow.com.*



Chinatown, My Chinatown accompaniment chords







Left: Octave shown on strings 1 and 3, fretted with fingers one and four. Note unused muted string and two open frets between two fretted notes. *Right:* Octave shown on strings 3 and 5, fretted with fingers one and three. Note unused muted string and one open fret between two fretted notes.

Audio CD
Track 24

Chinatown, My Chinatown

William Jerome and Jean Schwartz
1910 P. D.

From "Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm, Vol. II" by Dix Bruce
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Audio CD
Track 25 & 26

Chinatown, My Chinatown

Arranged by Dix Bruce

William Jerome and Jean Schwartz
1910 P. D.

Octaves solo

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Music Theory:
Mastering the Fingerboard
Technical Studies for Flatpickers

by Michel A. Maddux

Practical Applications Theoretically Speaking

Let's spend a few minutes together thinking about why we study theory and what makes it useful. I expect that you already know a bit of theory. For example, when you learned a new song like the great bluegrass standard "Blue Ridge Cabin Home," someone might have said, "capo 3, then play I-IV-V-I."

Did you understand what that meant? It means to play the root, the I chord, which on capo 3 would be a Bb major chord played out of the open G position, then play the IV chord, an Eb chord, but played from the C first position shape, then play the V chord, which is an F chord, but played using the D first position shape.

You knew what to do for the song. That's a good and practical application of why we study theory. It helps us learn new songs quickly, think about new ways of playing using chord substitutions, and learn which notes fit in a song and which notes do not fit.

Technique vs. Music

Regular readers may recall that I have said that the reason to practice scales is to forget about them. By that I mean that the intention is to get so comfortable with the scales and patterns that you completely forget about the technique of playing, and instead focus solely on the sounds that you want to hear coming from the guitar.

A second reason is speed. To gain speed on the guitar you have to play perfectly at slower tempos. When you can do that, you can then increase the tempo, that is, the velocity of the song to a comfortable performance level.

Even the simple scale forms should sound like music. Play them with good tone, with a clean touch, and perfectly in time with the metronome. Do not forget to accent the first of each group of four notes while you are playing, because that is what gives the music life. Practice at different dynamic levels as well. You should be able to play fast at a loud volume, and also at a very soft level.

When you are improvising you want to hear the melody in your mind and find the notes that reflect the melody on the fingerboard. On a slower song I might choose to play just the melody notes and brush a chord between them in a manner similar to Maybelle Carter's classic version of "Wildwood Flower." On a faster song, I might play a scale pattern or run up to the melody note, then emphasize that note with an accent. In either case the goal is always to reflect the melody.

Don't Think Twice

This time I want you to study a way of playing fills and runs behind a melody. The melody is the great Bob Dylan tune "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright." As you play through the song, try to accent the melody note. That makes the solo sound even more interesting, as the fills and the runs up to the melody provide spice for the ear without distracting from the melody notes.

I want you to think of as many ways to vary the melody that you can. Take these ideas as a jumping off point, and make the song your own.

Have fun, and keep on pickin'!

Audio CD
Track 28

Working With Melody Exercise (melody)

Arranged by Mike Maddux

Audio CD
Tracks 29 & 30

Embellishing the Melody

Arranged by Mike Maddux

Embellishing the Melody (con't)

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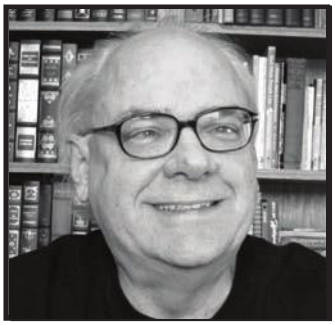
PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES

by Adam Granger



IT'S CONTEST SEASON!

Hi, fellers and fellerettes. Flatpick contest season is upon us, and as I prepare for our Minnesota State Flatpick Contest (see ad in this issue), of which I am head judge, I realize with some surprise that I've never done a column on these planoplectral jousts. Time to correct that oversight, so here goes:

In my forty years in the flatpick biz, I've racked up experience as a winning contestant, a losing contestant, a contest emcee and a contest judge, so I will offer observations on the topic of flatpick contests from all of those perspectives.

COMPETING

My first contest experiences were as a contestant. In fact, my first contest experience ever was competing in the Winfield contest in 1973. Amazingly, I have a recording of that performance and, even more amazingly, I am willing to imperil my ego and share that recording with you folks on the *FGM* CD which accompanies this issue.

What you'll hear is an amateurish presentation by a green 24-year-old flatpicker who had been working as a country guitar player and banjo player in Nashville and who knew just enough about flatpicking to be dangerous (but who still sounded like a country rock player). I was appallingly ill-prepared, and either too full of myself or too clueless to know it. I remember changing my mind about tune selection literally as I was taking the stage, and I had no variations worked up, and only a basic knowledge of scales, mostly pentatonic. Listen to the recording and you'll see what I mean. It stands as a prime example of how *not* to do a contest appearance.

During most of the 2 1/2 minute performance (only the first minute of which, thankfully, is on the *FGM* CD), I flail about playing the same licks and scales over and over, trying to play that *one good chorus* that will allow me to go out with a bang. The problem is that I had not ever successfully played the stuff I was trying to play in the contest. Nor had I mastered the technical issues required to play that stuff. It was a preposterous conceit.

Once I learned enough to know what I didn't know, I realized that I was neither fast nor clean enough to be a serious contender. (That said, my overall record in my four contests is two first places, one second place and one "tie for sixth"—Winfield.

And thus, my friends, do I selflessly offer up this recording for the betterment of us all. (This, of course, is made easier for me because we're talking about something that happened 40 years ago.)

Let me point out here that there is more than one reason one might want to compete: winning or placing is an obvious one, but some folks just want to face the challenge of getting up and playing as well as they play under pressure, which is an admirable goal unto itself. That said, I never try to talk people into competing (or going on stage at all, for that matter) if they don't want to, even if they're really good. It's not a necessary phase of good musicianship, and it's not everyone's cup of tea.

For those who want to compete, the Big Rule is the same as for performing: prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Work up original variations on eight or ten (or more) tunes, three to five iterations each. Practice your tunes standing up, sitting down, in every room of your house, in your yard, when you're not warmed up, when it's cold or hot outside (or inside), and when it's noisy and confusing around you. These are all conditions you could face in competition. Learn not only to survive under them, but to fluorish. Then, when other contestants are laboring under inclemency and impedimentia, you'll be at the top of your form.

A righteous and realistic goal for your contest appearance is to perform as well as you can. If that turns out not to be good enough, frankly but positively assess your shortcomings and go home and start preparing for the next contest.

JUDGING

My first experiences judging contests were with Dudley Murphy at the Little River Bluegrass Festival, run by Phil Slowy, in central Oklahoma. It would always be 100 degrees—conditions like I was talking about earlier. We were sequestered in a nice, air-conditioned motor home. There were fifteen or so good pickers around there then, and it was a pretty rough-and-tumble bunch. Once, after a contestant claimed car trouble as the cause of his tardiness and we decided to let him compete, another contestant accused him of lying and a fistfight ensued.

Winfield is, of course, the grandaddy of flatpick contests, and is very well run. I've never heard a complaint about Winfield Contest results. When I judged Winfield, there were five of us, culled from among performers at the Festival, sequestered and, officially, at least, unidentified.

The Minnesota State Flatpick Contest, in its ninth year, has three judges, sequestered. Our contest is held on the State Fairgrounds, during the Fair.

READING *EASY-TAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in sync", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

The biggest mistake a judge can make is to glance at other judges' score sheets midway through a contest and change their scoring standard because they perceive it to be out of whack with the other judges'. Here's what everyone needs to remember: It doesn't matter how harsh or lenient a scorer a judge is as long as he or she is consistent. The idea is to clear and reset the mind after each contestant and to judge the next contestant by the *same standards* used for the one preceding.

Usual contest judging criteria are tuning, tone, timing, originality and overall impression. In my judging experience, there has been very little talk among judges during the competitions, and no comparing of notes *viz a viz* scoring. We act as independent entities, not a collaborative body. One thing judges do speak up about is if they recognize a hot variation as belonging to someone else. (A judge might say, "Crary" in the middle a *Salt Creek* variation, for example.) This is important because twenty percent or so of the total score is reserved for originality. Judges share their respective knowledges of specific variations in order to assemble a master database, as it were, of everything everyone recognizes, thereby better levelling the picking field.

In judging, and in working with contest pickers to prepare their repertoire, the element of originality seems to be the most neglected: it is often the thing that separates the placewinners from the pretty good pickers. Consider: If a championship field of pickers is all playing good and clean and fast and with great tone and in good time, and their scores are all clustered tightly together, then, inevitably, the originality points become the tie breaker: fifteen points knocked off because their entry was one third Kaufman and one third Watson leaves an otherwise great picker tied for sixth.

As a judge, I listen for each piece to have a theme or themes I can grab on to. Referring occasionally to the original melody is always a great way to do this: if you're picking *Red-Haired Boy*, and I hear lots of the melody scattered through your performance, I can get farther inside your head and derive a better sense of your approach to improvisation. I mention this because a number of otherwise great contest pickers don't sufficiently invoke the melody, playing instead an endless catenation of licks (impressive though they may be). Other judges may go for this approach, but I prefer melodic ideas. I make no secret of this preference among our Minnesota Flatpick Contest entrants.

EMCEEING CONTESTS

Most of my emcee experience is in fiddle contests, but the criteria and ground rules are the same as for flatpick contests. As an emcee, you are straddling the line between running a dignified program that is respectful of the needs of the entrants on one hand and entertaining the audience on the other.

Because our contest is held at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds during the Fair, we will generally have a large audience. But, in the fiddle world, where contests are far more numerous, it is not uncommon for a contest—even a major one—to have more the feel of a collegiate gymnastics meet, attended mostly by participants and their retinues, a sparse populace in a large space, with lots of casual coming and going. It can be very distracting for the contestant if they haven't trained for such environments (remember my mini-lecture on preparedness?)

In a situation such as our State Fair venue, the emcee needs to explain exactly what it is that's going on, and why people might want to stick around for it. This includes an informal definition of flatpicking, a rules summary, a judging overview, a description of the fiddle tune format, a discussion of disqualifying elements and a description of the contest procedure. If this is done with a proper dollop of friendliness, the audience will want to stay, and they'll have an understanding of what they're seeing. Of course, at a free-standing, independent event—the gymnastics meet described above—some of this explanation can be curtailed.

Sponsors and prize donors and the like need to be acknowledged, but I am now segueing into a primer on general emceeing, and that's another column.

Once the competition begins, it needs to be all about the contestants. The audience will take their cue from the emcee on this. Contestants are focussed and, often, nervous. Each needs to be introduced in the same manner. Establish a "rhythm" of introduction, and maintain it for each contestant. Don't comment on particular performances, either good or bad.

I tell the audience in advance that I'm going to be low-key and "professional" once the contest starts. I tell them they can clap and hoot and holler if they feel so moved, but that I will be Switzerland: neutral.

CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

I'm going to skip over the preliminaries—contest promotion and organization—things at which I'm inept and which are, at any rate, off-topic for this column. I'll cut right to the site: what happens there—or, rather, what should happen there.

Contest organizers should have warm up rooms or spaces if possible, but remember that it's not always possible: there are, for example, no such amenities at our contest site, which, as mentioned, is a fairgrounds. That's why you want to have practiced under all conditions. One year, our contest had a downpour which necessitated a shutdown of the sound system. We ended up with judges and contestants all on stage, with the contestants about ten feet in front of us, playing acoustically. Ya never know.

Trophies, prize guitars, checks (for paid staff as well as for winners) should be ready and displayed if possible (well, maybe not the checks. . . .) Judging and tabulating materials should be present. There should be good rapport between judges, organizers and staff. There should be a contestant wrangler, and score talliers, and an educated sound person or crew with a system good for acoustic music. Stage entertainment during score tabulation and other administrative goings-on is good, and it's nice for the winners to come out and pick a few as a finale; it's a great way to end a contest to see smiling combatants jamming after the smoke clears.

Okay, friends. That's what I know about flatpick contests. I'll just add, unnecessarily, that they're fun to participate in, or to watch. Come see us in Minnesota on September third!

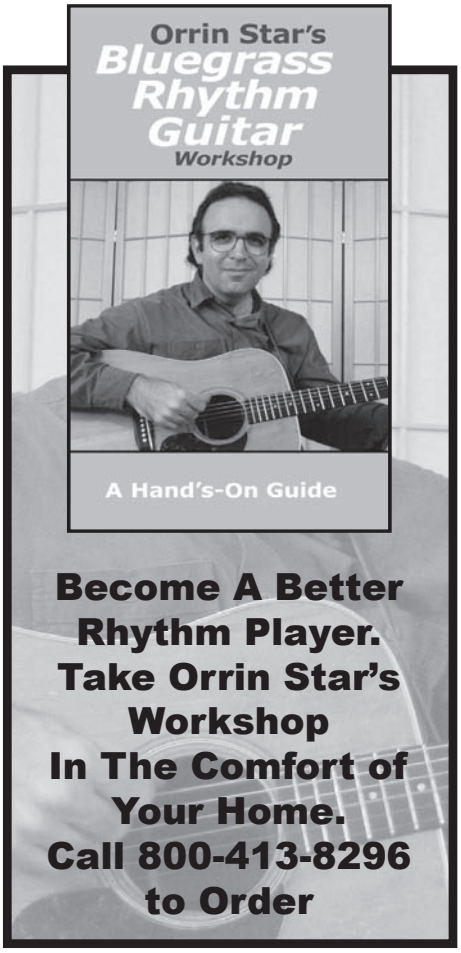
Other 1973 Winfield contestants, of whom Adam also has recordings (unfortunately of equally poor quality), were Dudley Murphy, Bill Holden, Bobby Clark, Jimmy Giles, Royce Campbell, Rick Bradstreet, Billy Perry Jr, and David Bonham. The recordings were made from the audience with a Sony TC-45 portable cassette recorder. Adam also captured nine tunes from an 11:30 Saturday night set by Doc Watson, Dan Crary, Norman Blake and Tony Rice. They played, in this order, Sally Goodin*,* Soldier's Joy*,* Red-Haired Boy*,* Salt Creek*,* Bill Cheatham*,* Blackberry Blossom*,* Arkansas Traveler*,* Old Joe Clark*, and* Black Mt Rag*. As Adam recalls, it was the first time these four had been on stage together. Although of poor quality, it's a stunning tape nevertheless. He also captured sets by the Newgrass Revival and JD Crowe and the New South.*

Bill Bay Presents

Flatpicking Solos

"My Irish Home"

I love Celtic music. I am especially fond of the wonderful Irish ballads and Scottish airs. "My Irish Home" is an original solo I composed in the style of an Irish ballad. It is in the key of D with dropped D tuning. (I love the resonance the guitar gets when you lower the 6th string down a whole step!) It should be played with a maximum of feeling and expression. I recorded this on a 7-string flattop guitar with the 7th string tuned to a low A, one octave lower than the 5th string. Alternate notes to the low A pedal tones are found in the tab part.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My Irish Home

Written by Bill Bay

My Irish Home (con't)

My Irish Home (con't)

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Tando Derrane

The recent duo album "Grove Lane" (Compass Records) that I recorded with my friend, National Heritage Fellowship winner and Irish button accordionist extraordinaire Joe Derrane, won Traditional Irish Recording of the Year in 2010 (Irish Echo Magazine). Joe is one of my favorite people and musicians on the planet. The album was recorded in 2009, when Joe was an even younger man! At age 79. Joe continues to write wonderful tunes as well as play traditional material, and our CD features seven of Joe's originals, including this month's pick, "Tango Derrane." Joe is always pushing the limits of the button accordion, and his take on the traditional Argentine dance form of tango is typically fantastic. I'd like to share with you some insights as to how I approached playing on this track.

Joe provided me with a "lead sheet" which was three pages long. He notated the melody and wrote in suggest chord symbols, which I was free to interpret in my own way. Since Joe is a well rounded musician, he was able to conceive of the actual chord changes to go with the melody - not always the case among Irish musicians. We ran through the tune a few times, as the form was a bit long and unusual, and then "rolled tape." I was also the engineer on the recording, which meant I leaned over and hit the record button on my laptop!

I can't claim much pre-planning in terms of what I would do, so in every way the rhythm performance is an improvisation - much the way that bluegrass backing would be: you know the chords you are going to play (if not the specific voicings), but your right hand patterns will probably vary from verse to chorus, etc. The transcription here is just the introduction, which is as long as most fiddle tunes at sixteen bars. Note the first voicing combines open E and B strings with three fingered strings, giving a unique sonority. The C79 is a typical extended chord that appears in jazz and other kinds of world music. I use my thumb to get the low G note in that voicing. My instinct was to provide as much low end as possible to supplement the dark mood and mysterious vibe of this section. For some measures, I have just written the basic voicing, rather than notating all the rhythms, which means "listen to the recording"!

Over the next few issues, I'll present more sections of this great piece, to share some ideas about different rhythms and ways to extend your chordal vocabulary.

John McGann (www.johnmcgann.com) is a Professor at Berklee College of Music. His new duo CD Grove Lane with Irish accordion legend Joe Derrane was voted

#1 Irish Traditional Album of 2010 in The Irish Echo. His DVDs Rhythm Tune Up and Rhythm Mandolin and his books Sound Fundamentals and Developing Melodic Variations on Fiddle Tunes are receiving great accolades. John's first solo album Upslide has been recently re-released and is available through Amazon.com and CDBaby.com, as well as John's own website. There are also two transcription folios available for Upslide, in guitar and mandolin editions. You can check out his custom transcription service, in which you can have any music of your choice notated, at the above web address. Drop by the website for more bio info, and lots of great free technique tips for flatpickers.

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Track 33

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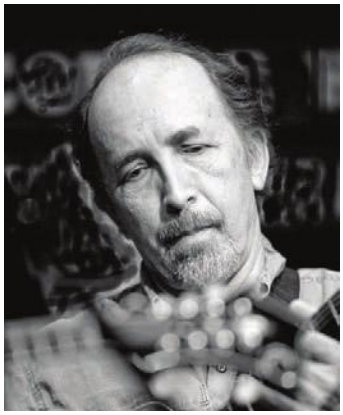

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

Around this neck of the highway, most bluegrass jams and picking parties are 90% songs (vocals) and 10% tunes. If you are a bluegrass guitar player, it makes sense to put a lot of your time into working out breaks to songs, which are a whole different mind set than fiddle tunes. I'm not saying give up on fiddle tunes! They are a lot of fun as well as useful for building chops. But you should also think about making up breaks to songs if you want to play some leads in all those vocal-oriented jams. A good thing to do would be to list a bunch of songs that seemed to be played a lot in your area. Pick out a few that are medium tempo where the guitar has a chance to play tunefully and tonefully and try to come up with some interesting breaks for those. Expand your repertoire as you have success with the ones you've already worked up.

Here is a break to a bluegrass warhorse, "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." It's been done by lots of bluegrass bands, but for me, the memorable version is Vern and Ray with Herb Pederson. Ray sings lead, then Vern comes in the chorus with Herb singing high baritone. Holy cow! I'm getting chills just thinking about that!! Anyway, it's a good melody and tempo for the guitar. I would do it out of F, hence the arrangement in C position. As with most breaks to vocals, it is good to figure out where a lead would be in a complementary key (G) just in case. I generally don't like to capo above the 5th fret.

As for the break itself, I'm using a rather long lead-in. You could choose to do a standard 3-note walk up (E-F-F#), but I wanted something a little smoother and different. Start on an upstroke to get the down-ups right, and try to make each note last into the next. The roll right after the first melody note could be just a hammer-on, but again, this gives it a slightly different texture, a different sound to hit the ear. The second measure of C uses a Clarence White-style lick going into the F chord. This is followed by a slide and a bunch of the same notes. I used to think playing the same note twice (or more) in a row was illegal, or at least a sign of not playing well. Now I think of lots of occasions to use the same note twice or more in a row! Either I've decided that it can be powerful, or my playing has slipped... This goes into a G run, broken up rhythmically to disguise it. The double-stop walk-down is something Doc Watson might do. Those double-stops give you a lot of power, always useful to the lowly guitar player.

On the repeat of the melody, I decided to change octaves, using a scale run to wind up with the melody fragment on the F chord. Finally the G section is a crosspicking variation of a common G to C lick. I'm thinking mostly of the first string notes as it runs down the scale to the final C.

Now I guess I'll try to work something out for the key of G....

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I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

Arranged by Steve Pottier

CD Highlight
Jonathan Maness: *Mountain Soul*

by Dan Miller

Jonathan Maness is one of those guys who I've been wanting to feature in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* for some time now. I first became aware of Jonathan's guitar skills three or four years ago when he was performing with the Dixie Bee-Liners. That is when his name first went on my list. Now Jonathan is working with Mountain Soul, a very tight band with strong vocal harmonies out of Knoxville, Tennessee. The band has just released a new self-titled album featuring Jonathan on guitar and vocals. While the initial tracking session was done at Scott Vestal's Digital Underground in Nashville, Jonathan engineered all the mandolin, guitar, lap steel, and vocal overdubs at his studio in Knoxville, and is releasing the record on his own record label, Anteflow Records, Inc. Additionally, Jonathan will also be releasing a solo album sometime this summer. With all of this exciting musical activity going on in his life, I felt like the time was right to finally give Jonathan some print in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*.

Jonathan Maness grew up in a musical family who enjoyed singing a cappella gospel songs and listened to everything from Flatt & Scruggs to Bela Fleck. Jonathan said, "Dad was a casual banjo player and Mom was a intermediate classical pianist. I got a guitar when I was ten years old, in 1989, just before we moved to Germany." Jonathan's father worked for Raytheon as a civilian contractor for the Department of Defense. When the family moved to Germany they lived off base since his father was not in the military. That may have been the best thing as far as Jonathan's future career in music was concerned. Jonathan said, "Where we lived there weren't many kids that spoke English. The only thing that I could find to do in my spare time was practice the guitar."

Jonathan's father taught him his first few chords and showed him how to play "Wildwood Flower." From there he used Mel Bay books and Homespun videos to teach himself how to play. He said that the *Doc's Guitar* video and Dan Crary's book *The Flatpicker's Guide* were two very significant sources of flatpicking material. Since the Doc Watson video also included some fingerstyle tunes, Jonathan worked

to develop his fingerstyle technique as well. By the time he returned home to the United States in 1994 he also had started to explore Merle Travis and Chet Atkins material. He said, "When I was in high school I was playing about half fingerstyle and half flatpicking."

Jonathan attended high school in New Bern, North Carolina. In school he played trumpet in the marching band and guitar in the jazz band. Having had no formal training in jazz, he started by adapting western swing rhythm styles he had learned from Doug Green (Ranger Doug of Riders In The Sky) to fit the Glenn Miller tunes in the band's repertoire. That grew to include learning the jazz comping styles of Freddie Green and Charlie Christian. At home, he continued playing along to the recordings of Alison Krauss, Tony Rice, Doc Watson, and Bela Fleck, while formally exploring a greater fingerstyle repertoire.

Jonathan's ability to play fingerstyle had progressed to the point where an audition at Appalachian State University in his senior year of high school landed him immediate acceptance into the music program with a partial scholarship to study classical guitar performance. When asked what the study of classical guitar in college added to his bluegrass guitar skills, Jonathan said, "It added an extra layer to my body of knowledge and help break some bad habits in my fingerstyle technique. It also helped me developed goal oriented practice habits through its regimen of theory study, music reading, and aural skills training. That helped put names to things that I was hearing and made me more of a well-rounded musician."

In addition to studying classical guitar at Appalachian State, Jonathan also started participating in local jam sessions around Boone, North Carolina, and joined a local "jam grass" band called the Pickadelics. Alumnus of this band include Mark Schimick (Larry Keel) and Darrell Muller (Old School Freight Train). The band played extensively at private parties and the western North Carolina clubs that are still very supportive of the larger roots music scene.

In 1998 Jonathan started working summers at Tweetsie Railroad, a western theme amusement park in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The seasons of '98 and '99 were spent as an actor in the western shows that were seen on the park's train ride. Jonathan also shared the stage as a guest singer and guitarist with musicians of the caliber of Darrin Aldridge, and Jason and Charlie Burleson. In 1999, three members of Tweetsie's cast, including Jonathan, shared the stage with the North Carolina Symphony showcasing cowboy music as a trio, singing Gene Autry and Roy Rogers standards in tight 3 part harmony. In the season of 2001, Old Crow Medicine Show was hired as the house band for one of the venues on the park. Jonathan's role was changed to include playing their shows on Old Crow's days off, with former and current road musicians Tim Greene, Doug Trivette, and Corey Pittman —all well known and highly proficient musicians in the western North Carolina bluegrass scene. The resulting scheduling melee required versatility on vocals and guitar, and Jonathan subsequently found himself also thrust into playing the mandolin. Late in the 2001 season Old Crow Medicine Show departed for Nashville. Jonathan then found himself in a full-time music gig and spent the remainder of that season honing his chops on mandolin and guitar.

From 2001 to 2003 Jonathan continued his music education at Appalachian State. In 2003, he graduated with Bachelor's Degrees in Classical Guitar Performance and Music Industry Studies (with a concentration in Recording and Production) and a Minor in Business. During this same time frame, Jonathan continued to perform as a classical guitar soloist. Also he played the Boone

jamgrass scene. Due to a personnel change, the Pickadelics had morphed into Wise Apple and Jonathan made the switch to mandolin. Wise Apple enjoyed an avid following among the college kids in Boone. By late 2002, Jonathan had also started a new a folk-grass group with Becca Eggers-Gryder. The band called themselves Amantha Mill. That band released a self-titled album in 2003. In 2004, he played with Amantha Mill and as a soloist, and married his wife Melony. In October of 2005, he felt a change of musical venue was necessary, so he and Melony moved to Nashville.

Moving to Nashville the week before the annual IBMA convention has it's advantages. Due to personnel shuffle, a job came open playing guitar for Valerie Smith less than two weeks after Jonathan's move to Nashville. Jonathan began a two year stint playing guitar with Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike. He stayed with that band from October of 2005 through May of 2007. During Jonathan's time with Valerie, Melony decided to get a Master's Degree from the University of Tennessee, so they moved to Knoxville in August of 2006.

After playing with Valerie Smith, Jonathan moved on to cover the vocal and guitar duties with Chattanooga based southern gospel trio, Young Harmony. He was with that group until through May of 2009. In addition to playing with Young Harmony, Jonathan also started performing with the Dixie Bee-Liners in September of 2007 and he stayed with that band through June of 2009. His guitar playing is featured on the Dixie Bee-Liners' second Pinecastle release, *Susanville*. He has spent the last two years playing for the Watkins Family, a contemporary acoustic gospel group, based in northeast Georgia. As of March 2011, he left them to pursue some personal musical dreams.

Jonathan's current band, Mountain Soul, started out as an East Tennessee family band featuring parents Shawn and Amanda, and brothers Daniel and Cory Kimbro. By the time Jonathan entered the picture in December of 2006, the parents had left the brothers with the band, and it had morphed into the makings of an impressive eclectic acoustic experiment. Daniel plays bass and sings a lot of the lead, and Cory plays the mandolin and sings tenor. Jonathan was invited to sit in with the two brothers at a gig in Knoxville, and stepped immediately and comfortably into the roles of guitar and vocals. An alumnus of UT's jazz program, where he was a classmate and collaborator of Daniel Kimbro's, Mike Seal joined the band in 2009 on Dobro and electric guitar.

Jonathan describes Mountain Soul's current release as being "Americana music that lies somewhere between Newgrass, Darrell Scott, and traditional country." The recording features awesome vocal selections. The lyrics are very strong and the singing is superb. Although the instrumental solos are impressive, the focus here is appropriately placed on the vocals. In contemporary bluegrass and Americana music most performing bands can produce fairly strong instrumental solos. What usually separates the amateur home town bands from the national touring pros is the singing. Mountain Soul presents the complete package — phenomenal vocals with superb instrumental support.

Jonathan's flatpicking on this recording is sparse. The only song where he really steps out to take a full solo is "Crazy Train" (featured on this issue's audio CD). For the majority of the other cuts Jonathan plays intros, fills, and split breaks with one of the other instruments. All of the guitar work is very tasteful and appropriate to the song. Years ago when I was interviewing Tim Stafford, he said, "I never lobby for a guitar solo on any song. If the song calls for a guitar solo, I'll take one. Otherwise, I don't." I get the feeling from this record that Jonathan feels the same way. He adds his guitar work to the song when and where the song calls for it, otherwise, he lets the Dobro, mandolin, or banjo have the spotlight. When Jonathan performs on stage or records in the studio he chooses from one of three guitars. He has owned a Santa Cruz Tony Rice model guitar since 2000. He also owns a 1947 Martin D-18 and a Taylor 812-CE.

Even though there is not a lot of lead guitar work on this recording, I loved it. There is a good Americana mix of country, bluegrass, roots, and folk music and, overall, there is a very nice uplifting feel to the music. Jonathan describes himself as "a country singer who likes acoustic instruments" and he is currently working on a solo album in that vain. Mountain Soul's music could be similarly described. Many of the tunes could be thought of as traditional country songs supported by bluegrass instrumentation. If you like great lead singing, strong vocal harmonies, and acoustic instruments, you will love this record.

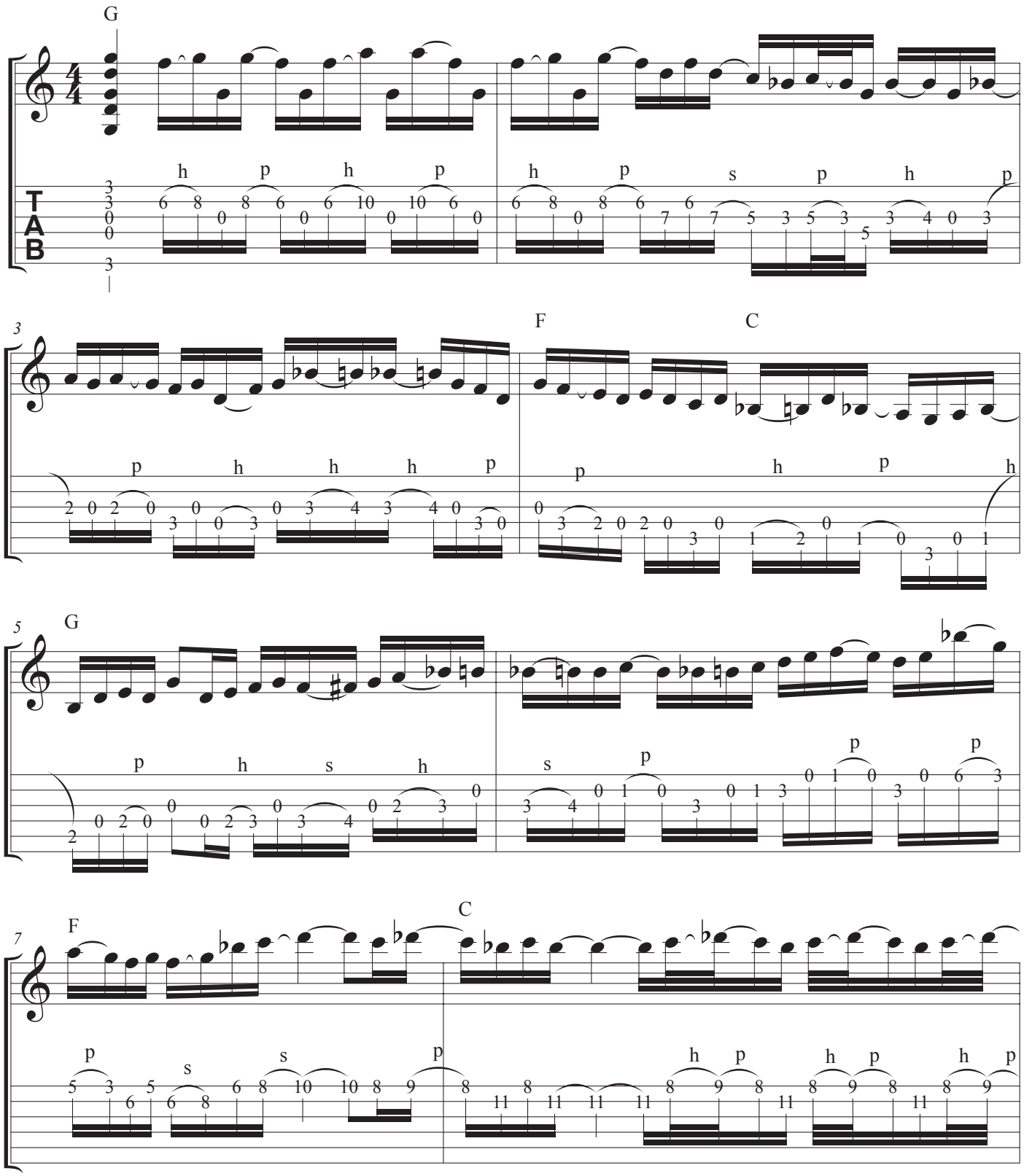
With the release of their self-titled recording, Mountain Soul hopes to start an aggressive touring schedule. They are currently exploring the possibilities of a European tour and they are starting to book national festivals and regional East Tennessee venues. If you see the name Mountain Soul on your festival program in the near future, make a point to set your lawn chair close to the stage for that show. I think you are going to enjoy what you hear from these boys. After hearing their record, I'm very anxious to hear them play live.

In addition to performing with Mountain Soul and working on his solo record, Jonathan spends a good deal of time working as a recording engineer. Based on what I heard of the Mountain Soul recording, and the rough mixes of his solo record, I'd say that he is as talented behind the mixing board as he is in front of the microphone. The Mountain Soul recording is very well engineered and mixed, and it displays a very high production quality. I expect that the bluegrass and Americana music world will see a lot of great things coming out of Anteflow Recording Studios and Anteflow Records in the future.

Audio CD
Track 36

Crazy Train

Arranged by Jonathan Maness



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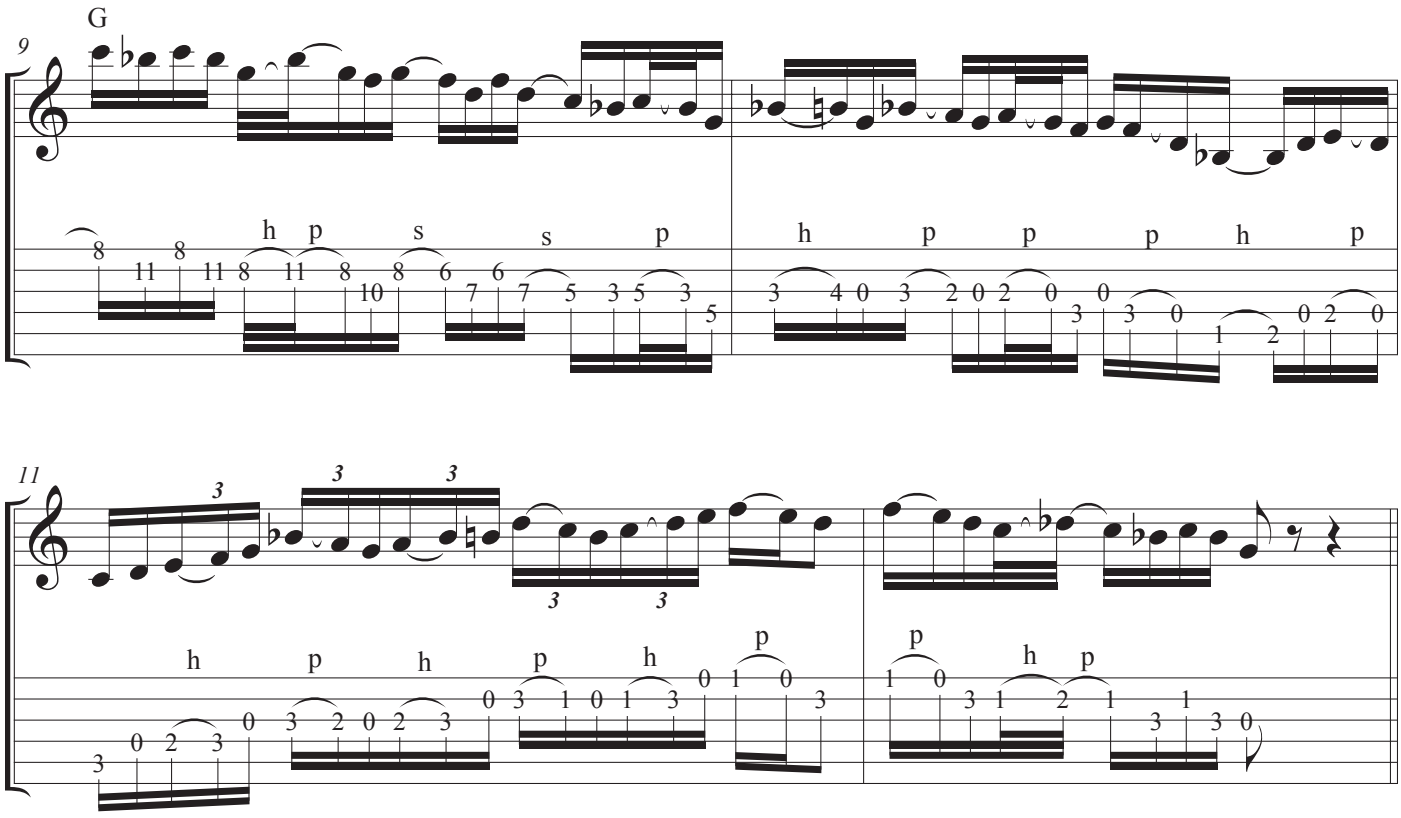
Crazy Train (con't)



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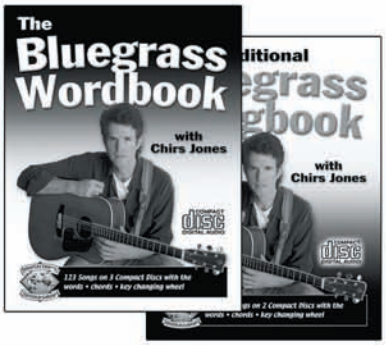

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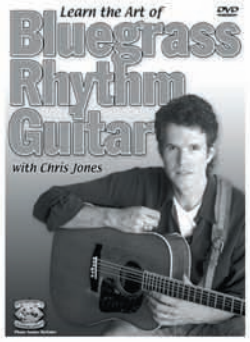

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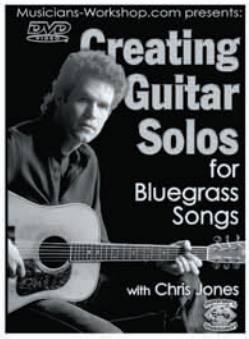

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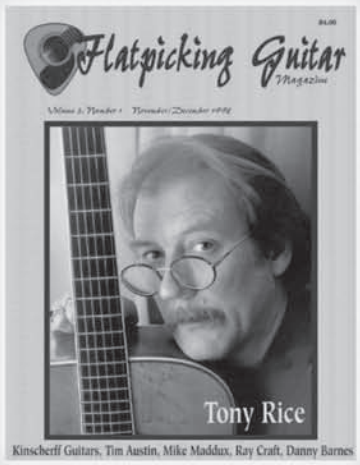

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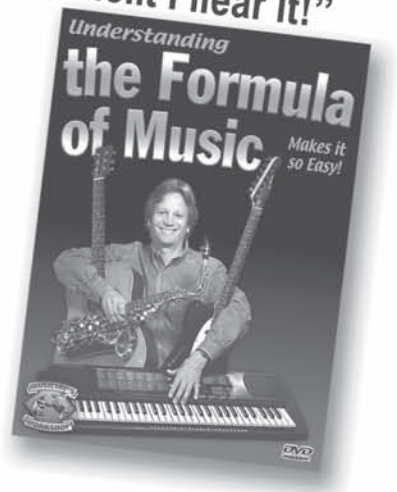

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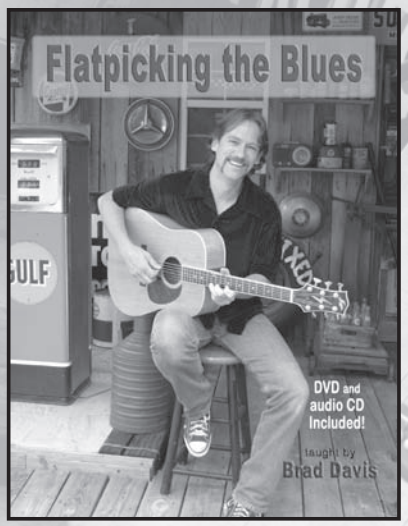

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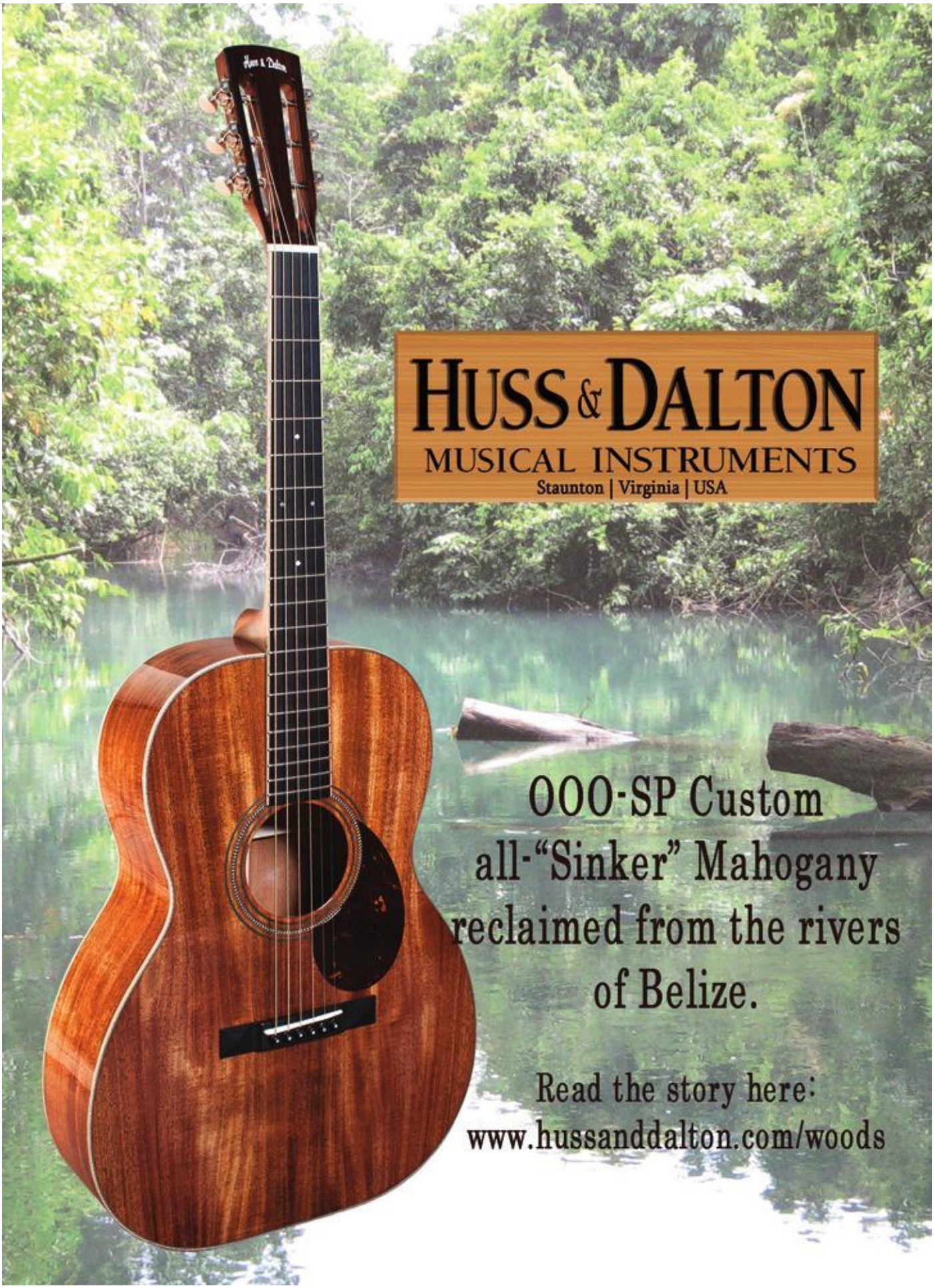
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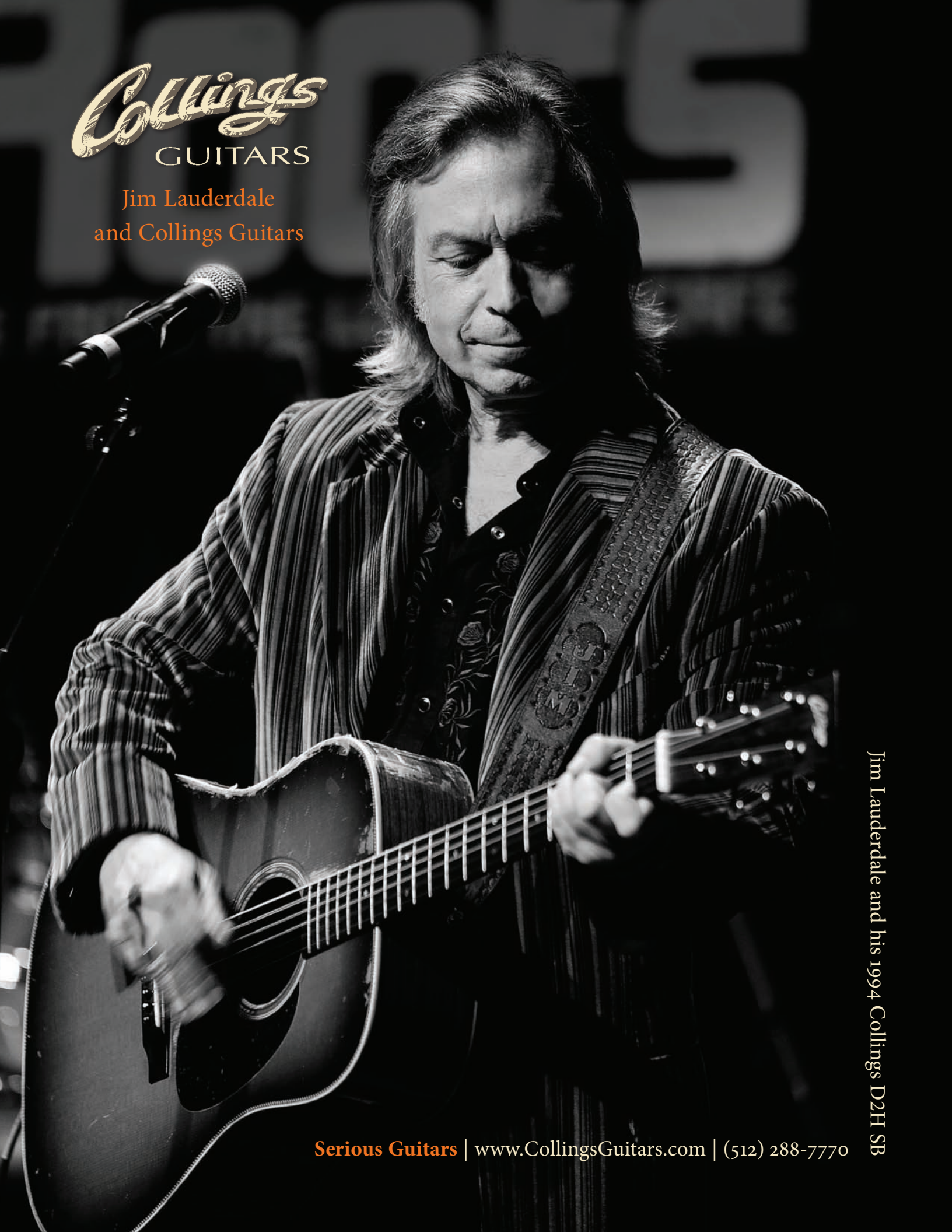
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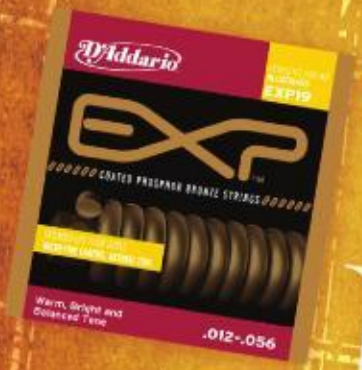

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